DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 462 175 PS 030 112

AUTHOR	Sharman, Phil, Ed.
TITLE	Child Support Report, 2001.
INSTITUTION	Office of Child Support Enforcement (DHHS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	98p.; For 2000 issues, see ED 448 881. Published monthly.
AVAILABLE FROM	Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services, Mail Stop OCES/DCS, 370 L'Enfant Promenade, Washington, DC 20047. Tel: 202-401-4626; Fax: 202-401-5559; Web site: http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/index.html.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Child Support Report; v23 n1-12 Jan-Dec 2001
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Agency Cooperation; *Child Support; *Child Welfare; Children; *Fathers; Federal Legislation; Parent Child Relationship; Parent Responsibility; Parents; Program Descriptions; Religious Organizations; *State Programs; State Regulation; Welfare Reform; Welfare Services
IDENTIFIERS	*Child Support Enforcement; Incarcerated Parents; Interstate Child Support; Interstate Cooperation; Noncustodial Parents; Paternity Establishment

ABSTRACT

This document comprises the 12 issues for 2001 of the "Child Support Report," which explores problems related to child support enforcement, reports on federal and state government child support enforcement initiatives, and summarizes research related to child support. Featured regularly are editorials and information on events of interest and funding opportunities. Major topics include: (1) direct deposit of child support payments in Virginia, and Washington's state employment project targeting noncustodial parents (January); (2) appointment of Tommy Thompson as Secretary of Health and Human Services, and child support collected from Milwaukee inmates (February); (3) grants awarded by the Office of Child Support Enforcement, and an update on the Uniform Mediation Act (March); (4) expedited paternity establishment in Maine, and the federal agency employer services initiative (April); (5) alternative methods of long arm service of process in Florida, and the Maryland Paternity Opportunity Program (May); (6) programs offering noncustodial parent services, and program initiatives in Pennsylvania and Illinois (June); (7) a Louisiana survey of child support customers, and incarcerated parents in Colorado (July); (8) appointment of Wade Horn as Director of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, and child support services to Indian children in Oklahoma (August); (9) New Mexico's child support enforcement website, and the benefits of the Wisconsin Works project (September); (10) appointment of Sherri Heller as head of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, and the collaboration of faith-based organizations with the government (October); (11) marriage promotion programs in Arizona and Utah, and grants awarded to faith-based organizations (November); and (12) Iowa's Employers Partnering in Child Support program, and Illinois' program to help Head Start parents access the Internet (December). (KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 462 175

Child Support Report, 2001. Vol. 23, No. 1-12, Jan-Dec 2001.

Office of Child Support Enforcement
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Phil Sharman, Editor

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PS 030112

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement Vol. XXIII, No. 1, January 2001

Direct Deposit of Child Support Payments in Virginia Makes Receiving Child Support Faster and Easier

In Virginia, direct deposit of child support payments electronically into recipients' checking or savings accounts is a reality.

In the fall of 1997, the Virginia Department of Social Services' Division of Finance responded to requests by 40 custodial parents to participate in a pilot of a direct deposit program in Virginia. After collaborative planning with several major banking institutions in Virginia, on October 29, 1997, letters were mailed to this group of custodial parents announcing the new direct deposit program of child support payments. Funds were first electronically deposited into the customers' bank accounts on November 26, 1997.

The Portsmouth and Danville district offices were identified to serve as pilot sites, with their experiences providing the basis for a possible statewide program. The new program was marketed by mass mailing of brochures touting the slogan "Direct Deposit: Receiving Child Support is Now Faster and Easier" to a targeted customer base within the Portsmouth and Danville districts.

The marketing brochure contained a basic description of the Direct Deposit Program, citing the advantages of using this method of payment (get payment faster, check cannot be lost/stolen, no trips to/waits at bank). Attached was a tear-off application/authorization agreement for automatic deposit of child support payments.

As of July, 2000, there were 26,990 direct deposit accounts (checking and savings) to which 59,671 payments were made via direct deposit for Division of Child Support Enforcement customers, representing 27.1 percent of all child support payments in Virginia. This represents a tremendous savings in staff time over any manual methodology, expedites the payments to where they are needed, eliminates the possibility of lost or stolen checks, and lowers the State's undistributed receipts.

"Direct deposit allows the program to get money to custodial parents in the quickest way possible."..... Nick Young

The Direct Deposit Program in Virginia is highly successful, continues to grow daily in enrollment, and is now marketed by Virginia's banking institutions, which stock the enrollment forms and mail completed forms to the Division of Child Support Enforcement. Additionally, the direct deposit forms are located in all district offices around Virginia, as well as on the Virginia Department of Social Services' Website.

"Direct deposit," says Virginia child support director Nick Young, "allows the child support enforcement program to fulfill its commitment to get money to custodial parents in the quickest way possible. It establishes and reinforces the bond that we have with our customers, and it has proven to be a cost savings measure, as well."

For more information, telephone Cheryl Parker at (804) 692-1355 or contact her by e-mail at chp8@email1.dss.state.va.us□

ES 60172

U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Inside

Colorado Caseload Managment Training.....4
Washington State Employment Project.....5

Internet Information on Financial Data Match

By: Gina Barbaro

OCSE recently enhanced its Website information pertaining to the Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM) program. The FIDM Web page, located at www.acf.dhhs.gov/program/cse, provides information on legislative authority, data specifications, implementation steps, in-state matching, federal matching, lien and levy processing, and operations.

The Web page has screens tailored to the information needs of parents, state agencies, and financial institutions. Its help feature enables users to find contact information for technical support from the state level, and to send a query for response by OCSE's FIDM specialists and technical support staff. The Web page includes the following educational, technical, and job aid information:

- Slide presentations on child support enforcement and FIDM Programs;
- Fact sheets on match requirements, federal matching with multistate financial institutions, matching at the state level, and lien and levy processing;
- Statutory requirements;
- Data specifications;
- Policy and program guidance;
- Contact information for state FIDM liaisons;
- Profiles of state lien and levy thresholds, due process, and appeal procedures; and
- Forms for multistate matching operations.

The FIDM Web page links to the OCSE internal search capabilities, allowing users to easily access and download other OCSE documents and other FIDM publications. For example, through the Web page link to OCSE's Online Interstate Roster and Referral Guide, state child support staff can access a profile of each state's threshold and process for seizing assets from financial institutions in interstate cases.

For more information, contact Gina Barbaro at (202) 401-5426.□

Gina Barbaro is OCSE's Financial Industry Liaison.

State Self-Assessment Regulations Published

Published in the *Federal Register* on December 12, the state self-assessment regulations require states annually to assess the performance of their child support enforcement programs in accordance with standards specified by the Secretary of DHHS and to provide a report of findings to the Secretary.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 requires states to conduct annual self-assessments of their child support programs to determine compliance with federal requirements.

Prior to welfare reform, states audited by OCSE were subject to a financial penalty if found not to be in substantial compliance with federal requirements. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) requires states to conduct annual self-assessments of their child support programs to determine compliance with federal requirements. There are no financial sanctions associated with self-assessments, which are intended as a management tool to help states evaluate their programs and assess performance.

For more information on self-assessment, see the July '98 and May '99 issues of *Child Support Report*.□

A Conversation with Dr. Joan Kelly

Dr. Joan Kelly, a clinical psychologist with a Yale Ph.D., has studied mediation and the impact of divorce on children's adjustment for more than 30 years. She has published more than 60 articles, served on numerous editorial and advisory boards, and was a founding board member and president of the Academy of Family Mediators. The following interview is excerpted from the Fall, 1999, Newsletter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC).

AFCC: *You have been studying the effects of divorce on children over a thirty-year period. What do we know now that we didn't know in 1969?*

JK: From 1970 until 1990, the tendency was to blame all of children's problems on the divorce. What we now understand as a result of much better research is that marital conflict is responsible for a great deal more of divorced children's adjustment problems than we used to believe. The symptoms we have seen in children of divorce are the same as those we now observe in children with married parents who are experiencing a high level of conflict.

AFCC: *Does that mean that if there were no divorces we would see the same types of problems in children of married parents?*

JK: Yes. Until the late 1980s, we were not studying children in the married family. But when research began comparing children of married parents with those of divorced parents and examining a multiplicity of variables, we learned that with married families there are enormous variations in children's adjustment. The central variables which account for the differences within both married and divorced families are the levels of conflict, violence, and the mental health of the mother. If you look at the research, the divorced children have more behavioral and academic problems than children whose parents are married, but the differences between the two groups are really quite small and they have been narrowing in recent years.

AFCC: *Why do you think the gap is narrowing?*

JK: One reason is that we have improved our measures and methodologies. Our society is also quite different now. Divorce no longer has the stigma it once did. There are more support systems, educational programs and information available for divorcing parents.... Most well-designed studies show that by their early 30s, there is no difference between young adults whose parents were divorced and those whose parents stayed married....

AFCC: *What is the impact of all of this information?*

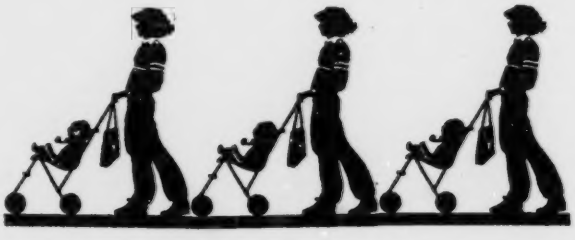
JK: It has really challenged our thinking about children of divorce and about divorce in general.... Rather than focusing on divorce, we now look for the conditions that create problems and those which accelerate improvement in child development.

AFCC: *There has been quite a focus on the role of fathers lately. What does the research indicate?*

JK: We've come full circle on fathers since the 1970s. Back then, we said that frequent contact with fathers was associated with better child adjustment following divorce. In the 1980s, several influential studies reported that there was no relationship between father contact and child adjustment. This was quite troubling for many clinicians. But in the 1990s—in fact, in the last two years—there have been studies that demonstrate a significant relationship between a father's post-divorce involvement with his children and their positive adjustment. This occurs if the father's involvement is characterized as emotionally supportive and "active parenting," meaning discipline, problem solving and appropriate parenting behaviors.... One very interesting finding from a national study is that when dads are more actively involved with their children's school, the children do better academically, are less likely to be suspended or expelled and like school better.

AFCC: *Thank you.*□

Used with permission.



Colorado Caseload Management Training

In November and December 1999, Colorado's Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) trained 440 county staff to use systems-generated reports to manage a caseload. In addition, county staff shared their own "best practices" in using various systems-generated reports to better manage their cases.

Although county participation was voluntary, 60 of Colorado's 63 counties were represented at one or more of the seven one-day training sessions held throughout the State.

"This kind of training can be used to impress upon staff how their individual working of the cases impacts the whole."

.....Diane Young, Colorado DCSE Policy Specialist

The training focused on training staff to use available systems-generated reports. These reports included:

- The Caseload Listing Report, which enables determination at a glance of the case's next appropriate step (i.e., establishment of paternity and support, location of the noncustodial parent, enforcement of the child support order and/or medical support, closure of the case due to emancipation of the child, lack of locate, etc.);
- A Monthly Monitoring Report, which tracks performance on over 50 performance measures for each county. The report is used by the State to evaluate county performance;
- The OCSE 157;
- A report that identifies cases with no court order;
- A report that identifies cases with orders on the system that have no ledger established in accounting; and
- A report that identifies cases with judgments that have no arrearage posted on the system.

Proper use of the reports enables workers to move stalled cases by taking the proper action. The goal is always to move cases into paying status. Examples:

- No order established for 90 days? Move the case back to locate for better locate information to permit service of process.
- No money coming in on a case with an order? Use locate to find an employer. Explore other enforcement actions if no employer can be found.
- Order on the system, but no ledger in accounting? Establish ledger.
- Interstate case? Is a request to another state to take action needed?
- Unworkable case? If case closure criteria are met, close the case.

In addition, the training was designed to help supervisors manage their teams. Besides assisting individual workers to identify problem cases and take action, the systems-generated reports can help supervisors to identify overall problems and see where the team needs to focus its efforts.

The training gave the State the opportunity to explain to county staff the federal performance measures on which the State is now evaluated in order to receive federal incentives. "This kind of training can be used to impress upon staff how their individual working of the cases impacts the whole—in particular, the State's ability to draw down federal dollars," says Diane Young, the DCSE Policy Specialist who managed the caseload management training project.

The training also provided a year-end boost to performance, according to DCSE staff. The State achieved ahead of schedule its year 2000 goal of collecting $200,000,000 by the end of 1999. In addition, the State achieved its performance measures for the year overall. While there were several reasons for this outcome, a marked improvement was noted on a number of factors between October (before the training) and the end of the year.

The biggest benefit: Instilling a mindset of caseload awareness that the caseload is workable and manageable.

The biggest benefit: Instilling a mindset of caseload awareness that the caseload is workable and manageable.

For more information, telephone Diane Young at (720) 947-5088, or contact her by e-mail at diane.young@state.co.us.□

Washington State Employment Project Targets Noncustodial Parents

Begun in mid-1998, "Support Has A Rewarding Effect" (SHARE) is a project designed and implemented by the Tri-County Workforce Development Council (WDC), Yakima and Kittitas County Prosecuting Attorneys (PA), and the Yakima Office of the Division of Child Support (DCS). The goal is to assist unemployed or under-employed noncustodial parents in securing and retaining employment.

The goal is to assist unemployed or under-employed noncustodial parents in securing and retaining employment.

SHARE targets the noncustodial parents of minor children who meet the eligibility requirements for Welfare-to-Work (WtW) as established by federal regulations. SHARE's program design is as follows:

- DCS identifies and refers prospective noncustodial parents to the prosecutor through the contempt process;
- If a noncustodial parent appears to qualify, the court orders him to participate in SHARE. The PA then refers the noncustodial parent to WDC for WtW Services;
- WDC refers the noncustodial parent to an appropriate WtW Service Provider; and
- WtW Service Providers determine program eligibility, conduct the employability assessment, develop the individual service strategy, and enter into a Personal Responsibility Contract with the noncustodial parent. An initial written assessment is provided to the PA to enter into the case file.

Noncustodial parents receive the full range of services allowable under the WtW legislation, such as case management, job readiness, paid work experience, subsidized employment (on-the-job-training), job retention/support, post-employment activities and other allowable services. The mix and sequence of services provided are based on the individual noncustodial parent's skills, abilities, and barriers.

All activities are employment based to secure and retain unsubsidized employment while at the same time developing strategies for wage progression. Other points:

- The courts and DCS may temporarily reduce the current support payments for the noncustodial parent who is in compliance with the contempt court order and strategies agreed upon in the Personal Responsibility Contract;
- DCS may consider waiver of excessive child support debts owed to the State, especially if the support obligation was originally set higher than ability to pay;
- DCS and the prosecutor may review the support order for modification if it is out of line with the noncustodial parent's ability to pay;
- WtW Service Providers report monthly noncustodial parent's progress to DCS and PA; and
- All referrals are tracked to determine the overall impact of the project.

Because the SHARE Project is geared to help the "hardest to serve" noncustodial parents, it was determined that the prosecutor's help was necessary to require noncustodial parents to follow through with paying support if they were able, find employment so they could pay support, or enroll in WtW Employment/Training Services to aid them in finding employment.

The majority of noncustodial parents referred to SHARE have been referred to the prosecutor for the contempt diversion process. A small number of noncustodial parents have volunteered to be in the program. These volunteers did not need to go through the contempt process, but have been referred directly to the WtW providers for employment services.

As of June, 2000, there were 134 noncustodial parents enrolled in WtW employment and training services, with a total of $40,000 paid in child support. Communication and coordination among the partners have been the key to the success of the project. Having a clear understanding of each partner's role in the project is essential.

For more information, telephone Kathy Thomas at the Tri-County Workforce Development Council at (509) 574-1950, or e-mail her at kathyt@co.yakima.wa.us.□

Maryland Helps Noncustodial Parents Find Employment

In the mid-1980s, Circuit Court Judge William O. Carr was concerned about absent parents appearing in his court who were not meeting their child support obligations due to unemployment. He initiated a discussion with Maryland's Department of Economic and Employment Development (DEED) about what could be done to address the problem.

The county has saved over $1,222,000 in incarceration expenses for the 1,300 non-custodial parents referred to the program.

The result was an agreement that the court could order noncustodial parents to participate in job search and counseling activities through DEED's Job Service. This was the beginning of Maryland's Absent Parent Employment Program (APEP). Program staff interviewed noncustodial parents, assisted in their job searches and provided liaison between individual noncustodial parents and the Bureau of Support Enforcement (BOSE).

The program expanded in 1988 when Maryland's Department of Human Resources committed State funds to the project. In 1991, DEED became the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), but APEP's goal remained the same through these transitions: assist noncustodial parents to obtain employment, thus enabling them to meet their child support obligations.

Most participants are referred to APEP through the monthly show-cause court session. If the reason for nonpayment of child support is unemployment, the judge can order the parent to enter the program. The program also accepts volunteer participants. Anyone with a Harford County child support order is eligible to participate.

APEP's staff of two counselors is present in the courtroom and can perform initial intake for the program. An appointment is then made for the parent to report to the APEP offices at the Maryland Job Service.

The initial visit to the APEP office includes review and signing of program guidelines, assessment of the parent's skills and experience, and discussion of employment barriers and child support concerns. The parent is expected to visit the office weekly until he or she finds a job. Each participant is expected to complete at least four applications for employment each week and to submit a worksheet detailing the search activities he or she has undertaken during the week. APEP staff spot check with employers to verify that applications listed were actually submitted. Failure to participate as required may result in a bench warrant.

APEP staff performs the dual role of monitoring the parent's job search efforts for the court and the Bureau of Support Enforcement and assisting the parent in finding a job. APEP counselors discuss job search strategies and application and interviewing techniques, help create resumes, and make referrals to prospective employers. Parents are taught to use the CareerNet computer system within the Job Service to identify job opportunities available both locally and nationwide.

Counseling during weekly office visits may reveal other areas where the parent needs help. APEP staff refer parents to rehabilitation services, education/GED services, visitation programs, support modification programs, job skills training programs, and work credit programs.

APEP tracks parents' progress and keeps the Bureau of Support Enforcement informed of their status. When necessary, APEP staff members testify in court about a parent's progress in finding a job. Once the parent gets a job, the employment is verified. Information on the new employer is forwarded to the Bureau of Support Enforcement so that a wage lien may be sent to the employer directing child support withholding.

The program is successful in saving taxpayer dollars and in improving child support collections from once delinquent noncustodial parents. In its 10 years of operation, APEP estimates that the county has saved over

Continued on page 7, "Maryland."

Child Support Children First

2001 Conference Calendar

The Calendar is printed quarterly in *CSR*: in January, April, July, and October. If you are planning a meeting or conference and would like it to be included in the Calendar, please call OCSE's Bertha Hammett at (202) 401-5292 or fax her at (202) 401-5559. The Calendar is accessible through the Federal OCSE web site under the "News" section: www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/new.htm. Select "Calendar of Events."

January

23-26 *California Family Support Council Family Support Officers' Training,* Doubletree Hotel, Sacramento, CA, Mary Leibham (209) 558-3021.

February

5-7 NCSEA *Mid-Winter Policy Forum and Conference: Family Self-Sufficiency—The Child Support Connection,* Omni Shoreham, Washington, DC, Carol Henry (202) 624-8180.

20-23 *California Family Support Council Quarterly Meeting,* Riviera Resort & Racquet Club, Palm Springs, CA, Noanne St. Jean (559) 582-3211 X 2403.

26-27 *OCSE State Self-Assessment Workshop,* TBA, Washington, DC Metro Area, Myles Schlank (202) 401-9329. By Invitation Only.

March

18-21 28th *National Conference on Juvenile Justice,* John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel, Reno, NV, For registration information call (703) 549-9222.

19-20 *OCSE State Self-Assessment Workshop,* TBA, For more information, contact Myles Schlank at (202) 401-9329. By Invitation Only.

19-21 *OCSE Big Eight Plus One Information Sharing Conference,* Drury Hotel, San Antonio, TX, Dan Fascione (215) 686-3724.

April

2-4 Spring Workshops on Child Support Enforcement Systems: *"Seventh Inning Stretch—Polishing Your Game,"* Crown Plaza Hotel, Seattle, WA, Kathy McCaughin (202) 260-6785.

16-17 *OCSE State Self-Assessment Workshop,* TBA, Chicago, IL, Myles Schlank (202) 401-9329. By Invitation Only.

18-20 *North Dakota Family Support Council's Annual Child Support Enforcement Training Conference,* Holiday Inn, Bismarck, ND, Colin Barstad (701) 662-5374.

23-25 Spring Workshops on Child Support Enforcement Systems: *"Seventh Inning Stretch—Polishing Your Game,"* Gateway Hotel, Crystal City, VA, Kathy McCaughin (202) 260-6785.

23-25 NCSEA *For-Attorneys-Only Training Seminar,* Spring Sidebar in Reno, Silver Legacy Hotel, Reno NV, Carol Henry (202) 624-8180. □

Start thinking about . . .

OCSE's 11th National Child Support Enforcement Training Conference

September 10-12, 2001, Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, Virginia. For information contact Bertha Hammett at (202) 401-5292. □

Maryland

Continued from page 6.

$1,222,000 in incarceration expenses for the 1,300 noncustodial parents referred to the program.

In addition, the program has been successful in achieving its key mission: helping noncustodial parents find jobs. Eighty percent of program participants were employed in 1997, 81 percent in 1998, and 86 percent in 1999. This has translated into significant child support contributions by APEP participants: approximately $220,000 in 1997, $250,000 in 1998 and $214,000 in 1999.

For more information, telephone Julie McFillin at 410-836-4621, or contact her by e-mail at jmcfillin@careernet.state.md.us □

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement
Division of Consumer Services
Mail Stop OCSE/DCS
370 L'Enfant Promenade
Washington D.C. 20447

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Return this sheet to above address if
☐ you do not want to receive this material
☐ a change of address is needed:
indicate change, including zip code.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Administration for
Children and Families
Permit No. G-717

SMITH, KAREN
ERIC/CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTER/UNIV OF IL
51 GERTY DR
CHAMPAIGN IL 61820-7453

Child Support Report

Medical Support News . . .

Children's Equity Act of 2000 Signed

On October 30, President Clinton signed the Federal Employees Health Benefits Children's Equity Act of 2000 into law as Public Law 106-394.

The new law amends 5 U.S.C. 89 to allow the Federal Government to enroll an employee and his or her family in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan when a state court or administrative authority orders the employee to provide health insurance coverage for a child of the employee but the employee fails to provide the coverage. The Federal Office of Personnel Management has been consulting with OCSE in implementing this new requirement.

For more information, contact Andrew J. Hagan at (202) 401-5375.☐

Child Support Report
Vol. XXIII No. 1
January 2001

Child Support Report is a publication of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services.

Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Olivia A. Golden

Commissioner, OCSE
David Gray Ross

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax (202) 205-5614
Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

CSR is published for information purposes only. No official endorsement of any practice, publication, or individual by the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Child Support Enforcement is intended or should be inferred.

Internet:
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/index.html
Permission to reprint articles is granted.
Acknowledging **CSR** is appreciated.

If you have enjoyed this issue of ***Child Support Report****, please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*

Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement Vol. XXIII, No. 2, February 2001

Tommy G. Thompson Named Secretary of Health and Human Services

Tommy G. Thompson

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson is the nation's leading advocate for the health and welfare of all Americans. He is the 19th individual to serve as Secretary of the Department, which employs more than 60,000 persons and has a fiscal year 2001 budget of $429 billion.

Secretary Thompson has dedicated his professional life to public service, most recently serving as governor of Wisconsin since 1987. Thompson made Wisconsin State history when he was re-elected to office for a third term in 1994 and a fourth term in 1998.

During his 14 years as governor, Secretary Thompson focused on revitalizing Wisconsin's economy. He also gained national attention for his leadership on welfare reform, expanded access to health care for low-income people, and education.

In 1996, he enacted Wisconsin Works, or "W-2," the State's landmark welfare-to-work legislation, which served as a national model for welfare reform. The program required participants to work, while at the same time providing the services and support to make the transition to work feasible and permanent. W-2 provided a safety net through childcare, health care, transportation, and training assistance. Wisconsin's monthly welfare caseload declined by more than 90 percent, while the economic status of those taking part in W-2 improved. The average family on AFDC had been 30 percent below the federal poverty line. However, at the average wage of people leaving W-2, families were 30 percent above the poverty line.

The Secretary believes that child support is an important life-line to persons who are leaving welfare for jobs and striving to become self-sufficient. In remarks to HHS employees, he indicated that the child support program needs to be even more vigilant in collecting support on behalf of children and families, and that a substantial increase in collections must become a major agency goal.

Recently, Secretary Thompson worked to extend health insurance to many low-income children and families. As of November 2000, The BadgerCare program—Wisconsin's version of the State Children's Health Insurance Program—had enrolled more than 77,000 individuals. In addition, Wisconsin's Pathways to Independence was the nation's first program to allow the disabled to enter the workforce without the fear of losing health benefits. The program provides ready access to a coordinated system of services and benefits counseling. As governor, Thompson also created FamilyCare, designed to help elderly and disabled citizens, and allow them to receive care in their homes for as long as possible.

As governor, Thompson also created the nation's first parental school choice program in 1990, allowing low-income Milwaukee families to send children to the private

Continued on page 2, "Thompson."

RS 2001 0330

U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Inside

Child Support Collected from Milwaukee Inmates.....3
Local Information Centers in Two Texas Counties.....5

Thompson

Continued from page 1.

or public school of their choice. He also created Wisconsin's Council on Model Academic Standards, which implemented high academic standards for English language arts, math, science, and social studies. Thompson also made unprecedented investments in the University of Wisconsin System through building projects and initiatives to attract and retain world-class faculty while keeping tuition affordable for students.

Secretary Thompson began his career in public service in 1966 as a representative in Wisconsin's State Assembly. He was elected assistant Assembly minority leader in 1973 and Assembly minority leader in 1981. Secretary Thompson has received numerous awards for his public service, including the Anti-Defamation League's Distinguished Public Service Award. In 1997, he received Governing Magazine's Public Official of the Year Award, and the Horatio Alger Award in 1998. The Secretary has served as chairman of the National Governor's Association, the Education Commission of the States, and the Midwestern Governor's Conference. Secretary Thompson also served in the Wisconsin National Guard and the Army Reserve.

Welcome!☐

Stephen Goldsmith

Stephen Goldsmith Addresses NCSEA Policy Forum

On Monday, February 5, Stephen Goldsmith provided the keynote address at the National Child Support Enforcement Association's 2001 Mid-Winter Policy Forum & Policy Conference. Mr. Goldmith is the White House Special Advisor to the President for Faith-Based and Not-For-Profit Initiatives.

In his remarks to participants, Mr. Goldsmith took note of the conference theme of "Family Self-Sufficiency: The Child Support Connection," and emphasized the importance of the child support program to America's children and families.☐

Child Support Collections from Inmate Accounts at Milwaukee County Jail

Using the Wisconsin statute that allows for the pursuit of unpaid child support by "any appropriate remedy," the Milwaukee County Child Support Agency began seizing money from inmate accounts at Milwaukee County Jail beginning on January 1, 1999.

Arrested persons often are carrying a significant amount of cash. Sometimes this money is catalogued as evidence, and at other times it is placed in a safekeeping account to be returned to the inmate upon release.

The child support agency has established a working relationship with the jail cashiers who manage these safekeeping accounts. When an inmate enters the jail with a specified minimum amount of cash or a check made payable to him, a cashier alerts child support staff, who then run the inmate's name in the child support computer. Approximately one-quarter of the referrals are a match for someone who is delinquent in child support.

In the year and a half since its inception, approximately $300,000 in child support arrears has been collected.

Once a match is found, a motion, which must be signed by a court commissioner or judge, is filed, freezing the inmate's account and setting a hearing date at which the inmate will have an opportunity to object to the application of the money to his child support arrears.

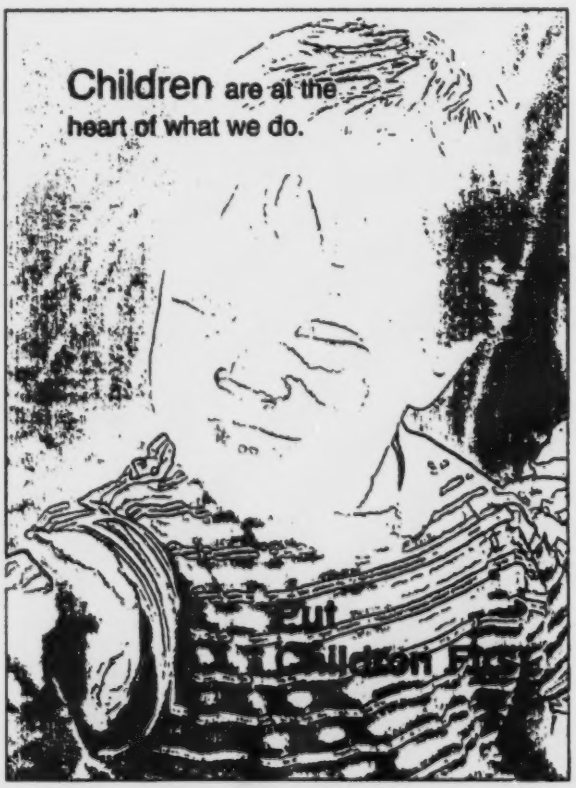
In the last several months, efforts were expanded to State correctional facilities. A list of inmates is obtained with their dates of birth and account balances. A motion is filed for each inmate with a minimum specified amount of cash in his or her account.

The implementation of a statewide child support system in 1996 made possible referrals to other counties in the State when a delinquent payer in another county is found with cash.

In the year and a half since its inception, approximately $300,000 in child support arrears has been collected. Examples of successes:

- One motion started as a seizure of a $2,000 State correctional facility account. During the hearing, the inmate testified that the account was being funded by payments from a trust fund set up for the inmate from his mother's estate.
- Further investigation through the account manager at the State correctional facility led to the discovery of a savings account outside the correctional facility containing over $35,000, all funded by the trust fund. Total collections from the inmate exceeded $27,000.
- In another case, an inmate brought a bank deposit slip to court to show that he was on the way to the bank to make a deposit for his employer. After running the employer's name through the child support system, over $10,000 was seized from the employer's saving account for his own delinquent cases.
- Two other custodial parents were paid the entire amount of the arrears and interest due them after waiting over a decade for their child support.

For more information, contact Rhonda Gorden, Director of Child Support Enforcement for Ozaukee County and Assistant Corporation Counsel at (262) 284-8404.□



Passport Denial Program Successes

By: Scott Hale and Rebecca Hamil

Over $6.5 million in lump sum payments have been collected through the child support passport denial program since its inception in June of 1998. This sum only reflects amounts that are voluntarily reported and does not include the majority of lump sum payments, payment agreements, and wage withholdings entered into because of the program.

Over $6.5 million collected through the child support passport denial program since it's inception in June of 1998.

Jennifer Vandemmeltraadt, an income maintenance program supervisor in Minnesota's child support enforcement division, reports that the passport denial program is a terrific collection tool for her State (see box).

"The success of the program depends in large part on communication between all agencies involved," she said. "It is imperative for the responsible counties to be firm with an obligor who has been denied. If a passport is released without a legitimate payment agreement, we have lost this enforcement tool for 10 years. Minnesota has, for the most part, left agreements to the discretion of its counties, but the State retains the authority to override a passport release if an adequate agreement has not been made."

North Carolina's Elbert Keith reports that the passport denial program also has been a success for his State. Recently, North Carolina received an inquiry from an obligor regarding denial of his passport. He needed a passport to go to Iceland to perform a concert for which he would receive a large monetary payment. The obligor contacted the local child support agency and an agreement was reached in which his employer would make the $12,000 payment up front and recoup the payment from the obligor's performance fee. Mr. Keith was happy to report the total payment of $12,000 was given directly to the custodial parent.

For more information, call OCSE's Special Collections Unit at (202) 401-9389.☐

Scott Hale is the Federal Offset Task Lead in OCSE. Rebecca Hamil is the Federal Offset Customer Service Team Lead.

Passport Denial Provides Impetus for Father to Pay Off Arrears

Passport denial recently was the mechanism for encouraging one Minnesota noncustodial parent to settle arrears that had grown to more than $30,000.

"Our office had been trying to collect current payments from this person for a long time," said Patricia King, a child support enforcement agent in Ramsey County, Minnesota. She received the case for collection in August 1999 after the child for whom support was ordered turned 18, making current support payments in Minnesota a moot point.

The father travels internationally on business. When a hold was placed on his passport in February 2000, making it impossible for him to leave the country, he immediately made contact with the child support agency. King and Ramsey County legal counsel negotiated with the father and his attorney for a week, finally reaching a debt compromise agreement that resulted in a lump sum payment of $22,000.

The number of passport denials is increasing as cooperation improves among states, the federal child support office, and the U.S. Department of State. This year, Minnesota began initiating passport denials monthly rather than annually, according to Jennifer VanDemmeltraadt.

Through denial of passports, Minnesota has recovered more than $80,000 in lump sum arrears payments over the past six months. In addition, consistent current support payments are being made on many other cases as part of settlement agreements.

"Minnesota's success with this program has not been limited to any socioeconomic class," VanDemmeltraadt said. "Payment agreements have been reached with obligors who may not be wealthy, but who, for example, have received out-of-country trips as a gift, as well as with professional musicians and athletes who travel abroad." Passport denial also has worked well with self-employed noncustodial parents for whom other enforcement tools such as income withholding may not have been successful.☐

Excerpted, with permission, from the Fall 2000 "Child Support Quarterly," a publication of the Minnesota Child Support Program.

Local Information Center Improves Customer Service in Beaumont and Nederland, Texas

Child support customers who call their local offices expect to have their calls answered promptly and their concerns addressed immediately. Those customers who become unhappy with agency services sometimes call their state legislators—a too frequent outcome in Texas before the State's legislature approved funding for four new child support call centers to be located in Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, and Austin. (Previously, all calls had been directed to staff in Austin.)

Customer service staff in the Information Center answer over 3,000 calls per week, with each staff member averaging over 80 calls per day.

Child support unit managers Cleve Halliburton of the Beaumont office and Terry Orick of the Nederland office of the Texas Attorney General's Child Support Division found themselves with a new responsibility and no additional staff. They decided to join forces to establish an Information Center for their combined five-county area, based in Halliburton's Beaumont office. Not considered large offices, their combined caseload is about 35,000 cases.

Within two months, seven staff were pulled from other duties in the two offices and assigned to answer customer calls—from both custodial and noncustodial parents. Data lines were used to transfer telephone calls from Nederland to the new Information Center in Beaumont so that calls would be local for Nederland customers as well as Beaumont customers.

Customer service staff in the Information Center answer over 3,000 calls per week, with each staff member averaging over 80 calls per day. Staff takes information from customers and resolves as many issues as they can, working with and updating the automated system as they do so. For example, Information Center staffers handle status changes, employer changes, payment information, and explanations of time frames.

Customer service staff focus on answering the phones rather than on doing long, complicated resolutions of problems. When a matter needs resolution by "production" staff, the customer service staff e-mails the production staff member, giving the customer's phone number and a description of the request.

Production staffers have three days to initiate a resolution of the issue—or actually resolve it. Generally, issues are referred to production staff only if their resolution requires an action on the case such as court action, extensive computer adjustments, or investigation.

Ninety-three percent of the calls are being answered, with an average wait of a minute and 13 seconds.

If a customer calls a second time, the customer service staff can see that they sent production staff an e-mail. So, the caller is referred directly to the production staff member. On the third call, the call is to be forwarded to the office ombudsman. Thus far, there has not been a third time caller. In addition, customers can access basic information such as payment information and court dates, or notify the office of an address change through the State's Voice Information Response System or its website.

Results

- Ninety-three percent of the calls are being answered, with an average wait of a minute and 13 seconds;
- Complaints to legislators have been reduced to one per week—down from three or four per day;
- Lobby traffic has been reduced, as customers are able to get the information they need by phone; and
- Production has increased, with more efficient use of staff.

If you would like more information, contact Cleve Halliburton, manager of the Beaumont child support unit, at (409) 654-2652.□

Guidance on "Working with Federal Agencies as Employers," Now on Website

Recent OCSE guidance, "Working with Federal Agencies as Employers," is now available on the OCSE Website in NECSRS at http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse.

A resource document developed to assist state and county child support workers in their interaction with federal agencies.

A resource document developed to assist state and county child support workers in their interaction with federal agencies, the purpose of the publication is:

- To provide federal agencies' addresses and contacts for sending income withholding orders;
- To help states streamline the process of redirecting child support payments of federal agencies from the counties to the state disbursement units (SDUs);
- To explain the coding on the U.S. Treasury checks that may arrive at the SDU without enough identifying information to link to state child support cases; and
- To assist states as they move from paper checks to electronic check processing through electronic funds transfer/electronic data interchange (EFT/EDI).

"Working with Federal Agencies as Employers" was sent to all states and county child support offices. If you would like further information about the publication, contact Nancy Benner at (202) 401-5528 or nbenner@acf.dhhs.gov.☐

Final Rule on Incentives, Penalties, and Audits

OCSE's final rule on incentives, penalties, and audits was published in the Federal Register December 27, 2000 (65 FR 82177). See Action Transmittal OCSE-AT-01-01, dated January 3, 2001.

This rule promulgates federal regulations on the new performance-based incentive system and performance penalties, and establishes standards for certain types of audits required by the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998. The rule adds new regulations and revises existing regulations contained in 45 CFR Parts 302, 304, and 305.

These changes largely implement the statute and provide clarification on the operation of the new incentive system, performance penalties, and aspects of audits.☐

Final Rule on Medical Support Notice Delayed

The effective date for the final rule on the National Medical Support Notice has been delayed for 60 days until March 27, 2001. The delay will allow Department officials the opportunity for further review and consideration of new regulations.

The final rule, published December 27, 2000 (65 FR 82154)), implemented provisions of the Child Support Performance and Incentives Act of 1988 (Public Law 105-200). These provisions require state child support enforcement agencies, under title IV-D of the Social Security Act, to enforce the health care coverage provision in a child support order.☐

Child Support Children First

Child Support and SSA Employee Assistance Program Broadcast

Recently, Jan Downing of OCSE's Division of Consumer Services, and Sheila Bradley, of the Policy Division, were invited to present a program about child support by the Social Security Administration's Employee Assistance Program broadcast network. This live, interactive video program is broadcast to more than 900 offices across the country. Each site is equipped with a VCR to video tape the broadcast to share with employees who cannot attend.

The programs have been very successful in reaching people who have interests in common but are separated by geography.

The programs, which offer expert information and the opportunity to ask questions, have been very successful in reaching people who have interests in common but are separated by geography. *We are interested in knowing if any state child support agencies are offering a similar service for their county offices.*

For more information, contact Jan Downing at (202) 401-9375.☐

Collections Update

Nationwide child support collections in fiscal year 2000 reached $18 billion. Also, the Federal Government collected a record $1.4 billion in overdue child support from federal income tax refunds for tax year 2000.

Collections in fiscal year 2000 reached $18 billion.

More than 1.42 million families benefited from these collections. In addition, a program to match delinquent parents with financial records found more than one million accounts belonging to more than 690,000 delinquent noncustodial parents nationwide.☐

Delaware Receives Award for Customer Service

Delaware Health & Social Services, Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) recently was honored with The Hammer Award—presented to teams of state and federal employees whose work creates a government that works better, costs less and delivers results. Vincent Meconi, the Secretary of Delaware's Health and Social Services, presented the award to DCSE. David Lett, the Federal Regional Administrator, and Juanita DeVine, the Child Support Program Manager, congratulated Delaware on their outstanding achievement.

The award recognizes DCSE's Enhanced Service Delivery Initiative (ESDI) that changed the way customer service is delivered in Delaware. ESDI introduced two new technologies to enhance customer service: The Automated Assistance Line (AAL) and Automated Call Distribution (ACD). DCSE also staffed a centralized customer service unit, which receives all incoming calls for the Division and provides immediate answers to questions or forwards them to caseworkers for action.

DCSE Director Karryl D. Hubbard said, "By removing all incoming calls from caseworkers to a centralized customer service unit, caseworkers have more time to dedicate to parent locate activities and other responsibilities. This system has allowed caseworkers to get back to the nuts and bolts of their job and improve performance."

For fiscal year 2000, the AAL recorded 1.1 million calls, 900,000 of which were resolved by the automated system. The AAL, available to customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, has saved Delaware $900,000 annually, the estimated cost of hiring additional staff to answer all the calls handled by the automated system.

According to State officials, DCSE's efforts to redesign its customer service delivery system would not have been possible without its partnership with the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement. Through this partnership, DCSE was able to tap into a large base of resources, identify the best systems in place in other parts of the country, and decide what would work best in Delaware.

Additionally, OCSE provided customer service training to Delaware child support workers, ensuring a commitment to quality customer service. This project is a good example of how an effective partnership can improve service to all child support customers.☐

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement
Division of Consumer Services
Mail Stop OCSE/DCS
370 L'Enfant Promenade
Washington D.C. 20447

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Return this sheet to above address if

☐ you do not want to receive this material

☐ a change of address is needed:
indicate change, including zip code.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Administration for
Children and Families
Permit No. G-717

SMITH, KAREN
ERIC/CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTER/UNIV OF IL
51 GERTY DR
CHAMPAIGN IL 61820-7453

Child Support Report

Mark Your Calendar for OCSE's Next Child Support Enforcement Training Conference

September 10 - 12, 2001

The Administration for Children and Families Office of Child Support Enforcement's **11th National Child Support Enforcement Training Conference** will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City in Arlington Virginia, September 10 – 12, 2001.

These conferences are noted for their emphasis on practical information and techniques that can improve your casework and management skills. For early-bird information, contact OCSE's Bertha Hammett at (202) 401-5292 or bhammett@acf.dhhs.gov.☐

Child Support Report
Vol. XXIII No. 2
February 2001

Child Support Report is a publication of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services.

Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Olivia A. Golden

Acting Commissioner, OCSE
Frank Fuentes

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax (202) 205-5614
Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

CSR is published for information purposes only. No official endorsement of any practice, publication, or individual by the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Child Support Enforcement is intended or should be inferred.

Internet:
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/index.html
Permission to reprint articles is granted. Acknowledging CSR is appreciated.

If you have enjoyed this issue of ***Child Support Report,*** *please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*

Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement

Vol. XXIII, No. 3, March 2001

OCSE Awards Grants for Child Support Development Projects

The Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) has awarded more than $1.2 million in new grants to states, faith-based, and non-profit organizations to further advance the performance of the nation's child support enforcement system. The grants, which provide resources to help recipients improve their child support programs, will examine new ways to augment child support enforcement services to increase collections for children and to promote responsible parenthood.

Several grants are designed to help parents involved with the criminal justice system provide more reliable and regular child support for their children. The State of Washington will test methods to increase employment and child support for noncustodial parents who are in the correctional system. This will include collaboration with other State agencies such as the State's Department of Corrections and Department of Employment Security and Workforce Development.

Minnesota will work with noncustodial parents who are incarcerated, are unemployed/underemployed, or who are low-income to investigate potential means to improve compliance with child support orders. This will include collaboration with the State's Department of Corrections. Principal research activities will be conducted in Hennepin County.

In the District of Columbia, STRIVE Inc. will demonstrate new methods to increase child support collections through services to unemployed noncustodial parents on probation or parole.

Four grants were awarded to enhance outreach to the Hispanic/Latino community. In Yakima County, Washington, a grant will determine the barriers to the provision of effective child support services and will include a consumer education component. Local community leaders will provide community outreach and communication on child support services.

The grants . . . will examine new ways to augment child support enforcement services to increase collections for children and to promote responsible parenthood.

The United Migrant Opportunities Services in Milwaukee, Wisconsin will design and test new means to reach out to the Latino/Hispanic community to improve child support services in Milwaukee and throughout Wisconsin.

The Christian Family Gathering, also in Milwaukee, will provide community outreach that includes involving church members as advocates to assist individuals in need of child support services.

In Connecticut, the Women's Education and Legal Fund will provide child support outreach to the Hispanic/Latino communities in Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, and the Willimantic areas. This will include identifying

Continued on page 2, "Grants."

PS 03012

U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Inside

Uniform Mediation Act Update.....3
Reviewing Child Support Guidelines.....4

Grants

Continued from page 1.

and developing community leaders to provide child support education and advocacy services.

In addition, the National Child Support Enforcement Association (NCSEA) received funding to pursue a plan for developing standards for and implementing a national child support caseworker certification program.

Grant Recipients by Project and Funding

Services to noncustodial parents
- Washington $175,000
- Minnesota $300,000

Interstate
- National Center for State Courts $40,000

Outreach to Hispanic/Latino Population
- Yakima, Washington $150,000
- United Migrant Services, Milwaukee $142,626
- Christian Family Gathering, Milwaukee $99,895
- CT Women's Education & Legal Fund $183,313

Other
- NCSEA $74,900
- STRIVE Inc., DC 75,000

Total $1,240,734.□

Father and son.

Child Support and Education Expenses Past Age 18

All state child support guidelines include an age at which financial support normally ends, but nearly all allow for deviations in certain cases. Most guidelines focus on children's college or vocational education expenses, or on children who have special needs and are unlikely to become self-supporting. Frequently, state legislators build these common deviations into their guidelines.

Thirty-eight states terminate support at the age of 18 unless the child is still attending high school. Most of these states permit support until the age of 19 or graduation from high school, whichever occurs first.

Most guidelines focus on children's college or vocational education expenses, or on children who have special needs.

Seventeen states make provisions specifically for higher education within their guidelines or in case law. Four states address higher education needs generally within their guidelines without specifying college support. Twenty-seven states have not addressed child support for higher education in their statutory or case law. These states, however, do permit courts to enforce private agreements between the parents concerning educational expenses.

Pennsylvania is the only state where the duty to provide college support has been found unconstitutional by the State Supreme Court. The Pennsylvania legislature enacted a statute in 1993 allowing courts to order that parents provide for higher education expenses if the parents are separated, divorce, unmarried, or otherwise subject to an existing support obligation.

In 1995, however, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that the statute violated the constitutional right to equal protection because, under the law, divorced parents could be required to pay for a child's college education while married ones could not.□

The above is a revised version of a LegisBrief (April/May, 1999) prepared by Stephanie Walton of NCSL's Child Support Project. NCSL's Child Support Project is funded by OCSE.

Uniform Mediation Act Update

By: Richard C. Reuben

In a unique partnership, cooperating drafting committees of the American Bar Association Section of Dispute Resolution and the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws are working together to draft a Uniform Mediation Act.

The hope of the two drafting committees is to make the law affecting mediation more consistent and easier to access and understand regardless of the location of one's practice or one's professional orientation.

The mass of current state laws affecting the field at best varies widely and at worst is often inconsistent. This, in part, is because of the dramatic expansion in the number of statutory provisions adopted by states over the last 20 years. Today, there are more than 2,500 state mediation-related statutes, resulting in a complex tangle of legal requirements regarding mediation that vary by state, type of program, and subject matter.

. . . to make the law affecting mediation more consistent and easier to access and understand regardless of the location of one's practice or one's professional orientation.

Mediation confidentiality presents a great example. In this area alone, there are more than 250 state statutes. Yet remarkably, only about half the states have enacted laws that apply to all mediations conducted in the state, and even those statutes vary considerably in terms of the scope of their application and the degree of protection they provide. The other half also has widely varying provisions that are scattered within the provisions of other substantive statutes—such as laws regulating farmer-lender relations or medical malpractice claims. In those states, unless a mediation falls within the subject-specific statute, it proceeds without any statutory protection whatsoever.

While some mediators are able to work under the protection of specific mediation statutes or court rules, many mediations in the country are conducted without any legal protection or guidance whatsoever. Many mediators who believe that they could not be called to testify about what happens during their mediations, for example, might well be surprised to find they may not have such protection after all.

After factoring in the many mediators who practice in more than one state or have multistate clients and the uncertainty about which state law would apply in such cases, the need for uniform strong protections seems clear enough. The challenge, however, is to design a statute that is easy to read and understand, encourages diversity in practice, strengthens the mediation field, guards the essential elements of mediation, and protects parties and mediators' interests.

The following are some highlights of the most recent draft (June 1999), as amended for consideration by the Drafting Committees in December 1999.

- The act would apply to disputants who enter mediation by written agreement or at the request of a court, government entity, or mediator.
- Confidentiality is the centerpiece of the proposed statute: The proposal addresses this by prohibiting mediators from disclosing mediation communications, including reports to a judge, agency, or authority responsible for rulings or investigations related to the parties.
- The act also offers additional confidentiality protections in the form of a privilege that can be asserted by the disputants or the mediator (similar to the doctor/patient, priest/penitent, and attorney/client privileges) in civil, juvenile, criminal misdemeanor, arbitration, and administrative proceedings. There are relatively few exceptions to this general rule. Several are familiar exceptions, such as those permitting a written settlement agreement to be introduced as evidence in a court proceeding, allowing mediators to disclose mediation communications that evince a risk of serious bodily or property harm, and making it possible for mediators to comply with other statutory reporting obligations, such as child or elder abuse.
- Information that would be otherwise admissible or subject to discovery would not become inadmissible or protected from disclosure if used in mediation.
- Mediators would be required to disclose reasonably known conflicts of interest, and, if requested, to provide information about their qualifications. □

Richard Reuben is the Reporter for the ABA Drafting Committee.

This article originally appeared in the newsletter of the Association of Family, Court, and Community Professionals, Winter 2000, Volume 19, No. 1, and is used with AFCC's permission.

Reviewing Child Support Guidelines

By: Stephanie Walton

In 1984, Congress passed legislation requiring all states to formulate guidelines for determining the appropriate amount of child support awards, and in 1988, Congress required states to make the guidelines presumptive (having reasonable grounds for acceptance) rather than advisory.

Before the federal requirements, child support awards were sometimes not adequate to meet the needs of the children, and award decisions could be inconsistent. Two families with similar circumstances and income levels might have very different support awards, even within the same court jurisdiction. Presumptive guidelines ensured that child support awards were more uniform.

The 1988 federal law also required states to conduct a review of their child support guidelines every four years. Within that review, states must examine current economic data to ensure that the awards resulting from the guidelines are meeting the economic needs of children.

States vary in how they initially adopted and currently review their child support guidelines. In the great majority of states, guidelines are adopted either by the legislature through statute or by the court system through court rule. In a few states, the child support agency adopts guidelines through administrative rule.

States approached guideline formation in a variety of ways. Most adopted the income shares model, in which child support is determined based on both parents' income. The most common alternative to the income shares model is the percentage of income model, which considers only the income of the noncustodial parent.

A few states adopted the Melson model, which is somewhat more complex than the other models and provides a self-support reserve for the noncustodial parent. Many states, particularly those with income shares and Melson models, also permitted a variety of deviations from the basic child support calculation to provide for expenses such as health care, child care, and private education.

Award amounts reflected in state child support guideline tables are based on economic estimates of the expenses of raising children. Child support experts have not reached a consensus on which economic model is the most accurate, so states have generally continued to follow the model they used when first adopting their guidelines, making small adjustments for inflation or regional variations in the cost of living.

In addition to studying the economic basis for the guidelines, states are required to conduct a review of case data to track common deviations from the guidelines. Deviation reviews focus on the number and types of deviations, which can help states in adjusting the guidelines to account for specific expenses and thus reduce the necessity of deviations.

The unique challenges of helping low-income noncustodial parents pay child support are being recognized and discussed in many states, and some have responded by including a variety of adjustments for low-income parents in the child support guidelines. Many states have also incorporated a self-support reserve into their guidelines for low-income parents.

Variations in states' guideline review processes are independent of whatever governmental entity formulates the guidelines. In states with administrative rules, for example, some reviewing bodies seek substantial public input early in the review process. In other states, agencies draft changes to the guidelines and wait for formal public hearings for public input.

Many states form review committees that examine the current guideline for a period of time before recommending policy changes. Review committees or task forces often include legislators, members from advocacy groups representing both custodial and noncustodial parents, judges and clerks of court, and representatives of the state child support agency. In states with statutory guidelines, an interim committee may be appointed to study the guidelines and draft a bill for introduction in the next legislative session.

Most policymakers value public input throughout the process, and advocacy groups are gaining increasing influence in the review process. Parents and representatives of advocacy groups can identify issues of concern and also point out issues likely to be controversial. Child support experts advise review committees to research the data and information provided and confirm its accuracy.

Quadrennial review of the child support guidelines give states the opportunity to regularly examine the goals of their guidelines. In addition to updating formulas for economic reasons, the reviews allow policymakers to consider current issues that are affecting families and change policy accordingly. The guideline review process helps states ensure that their child support guidelines meet the needs of the children and families they serve.□

Stephanie Walton is a Senior Policy Analyst on the National Conference of State Legislature's (NCSL) Child Support Project.

The NCSL Child Support Project is funded by OCSE.

Are the Demographics of the Child Support Population Changing?

OCSE recently funded a demographic study of and report on the child support program's possible future population, seeking information about its likely composition in the years 2004 and 2009. The projections made in the report for the years 2004 and 2009 are built on baseline data developed by the contractor for 1988 and 1998.

The following is excerpted from the final report.

The rapid growth of the child support population of the United States over the past decade is projected to slow between 1998 and 2009. Our projections suggest that the growth of the child support population over the next 10 years will continue to outpace the total population growth in the United States, but will not be as remarkable as the growth of the previous 10 years.

In 1998, the child support population of the United States reached an estimated 62 million people, a 32 percent increase from 1988. By 2009, we project that the child support population of the United States will reach 72 million people, a 15 percent increase from 1998. More than 19 million custodians will be the primary caregivers for 30 million children, with a projected 22 million noncustodial parents.

Our projections suggest that the growth of the child support population over the next 10 years will continue to outpace the total population growth in the United States, but will not be as remarkable as the growth of the previous 10 years.

The rate of growth of the child support population is projected to slow for three reasons.

- First, the population of the United States is aging out of the prime parenthood years. Over the next 10 years, the large cohorts of baby boomers will begin to be replaced by the much smaller cohorts of the baby bust.
- Second, nonmarital fertility has been fairly constant over the past five years and is projected to remain so (albeit at a very high level by historic standards).
- And third, divorce rates in the United States have declined from their peak in the early 1980s.

Despite the slowing in the overall rate of growth of the child support population, . . . the number of custodial fathers will increase dramatically, as will the number of nonparent custodians (including grandparent custodians), and never-married custodians.

Despite the slowing in the overall rate of growth of the child support population, certain segments of the population will continue to experience rapid growth rates. For example, the number of custodial fathers will increase dramatically, as will the number of nonparent custodians (including grandparent custodians), and never-married custodians.

Each of these subgroups is projected to grow substantially faster than the overall child support population. Likewise, Hispanics and Asians will experience faster growth rates than any other race or ethnic group. Finally, growth will be stronger in the early part of the projection period, from 1998 to 2004, than in the latter part of the projection period from 2004 to 2009.□

The report from which this excerpt is taken is entitled, "Getting to Know the Future Customers of the Office of Child Support: Projections from 2004 and 2009." *It was written, under contract to OCSE, by Hans P. Johnson and Margaret O'Brien-Strain of Acumen, LLC, in Burlingame, California.*

Video Conferencing Interviews Save Travel Time and Costs in Washington State

The Division of Child Support (DCS) office in Everett, Washington serves the northwestern part of Washington State, a 6,350 square mile area that includes five counties and a number of islands. The distance from the eight Community Service Offices, where TANF applications are accepted, to the DCS office in Everett, ranges from 5 to 60 miles.

Until 1997, child support staff had to rely on paper applications alone, or customers had to travel long distances to initiate a child support case. When paternity establishment was necessary, a paternity interview with the prosecutor's staff was a prerequisite.

The distances between staff and client frequently posed real barriers for cooperative clients without good transportation and sometimes provided a convenient excuse for clients who were less than enthusiastic about establishing paternity. Similarly, administrative hearings required extensive travel for Administrative Law Judges, Claims Officers, and Conference Board Chairs.

In the spring of 1997, the Everett DCS began using video conferencing technology to support enforcement interviews, paternity interviews, administrative hearings, and other activities.

Support Enforcement Interviews: TANF applicants can complete their applications and walk into another room to be interviewed over video camera by DCS staff in Everett. DCS staff and the applicant see each other on television screens and speak by phone. Current locate information is provided and clarifying questions can be asked on the spot. Some documents are left with Community Service Office (CSO) TANF staff to be forwarded to child support staff in Everett.

Paternity Interviews: After applying for TANF and completing the initial child support interview by video with DCS staff, appropriate cases are referred for video paternity interviews. The applicant moves to equipment that has the capability of sharing documents. The prosecutor's staff conducts the paternity interview remotely. Paternity questionnaires are prepared and signed before the applicant ever leaves the office.

Administrative Hearings: Washington State uses an administrative process to establish child support in most cases. When the parties cannot agree on the amount, an Administrative Law Judge hears the case. Agency attorneys and judges travel around the region to conduct and attend hearings. Video conferencing equipment was installed in two TANF offices and in the Everett DCS office to permit these administrative hearings to be held by video. These procedures were instituted to increase the time available to hold the hearings by reducing travel time and costs for Claims Officers and Administrative Law Judges.

Video conferencing to conduct child support interviews has been successful in thousands of cases. The technique has proved especially beneficial in cases in which there was already a support order and DCS needed to initiate an enforcement action. The video interviews facilitated DCS staff to obtain and quickly act on new employer information. Almost twice as many video interview cases as paper application cases saw enforcement action commenced within 60 days of application (31 percent versus 16 percent).

Customers like the process. Ninety-two percent reported they were comfortable with the video equipment and 97 percent believed the DCS interviewer was helpful in answering questions.

Increased collaboration between DCS and TANF staff also resulted. Significant TANF staff involvement is required to explain the video interviews to applicants, show them how to use the equipment, and to fax or transmit documents to DCS. Monthly meetings between DCS and TANF staff to discuss the video interview process laid the ground work for further collaboration on other issues.

For more information, contact Kathy Ellington, Support Enforcement Program Administrator, Division of Child Support, Washington Department of Social and Health Services, at (425) 438-4848.□

Child Support Children First

OCSE and Head Start Collaborate

The HHS/Head Start Bureau recently awarded 21 Early Head Start Fatherhood Demonstration Grants that will engender collaboration between the Head Start and Child Support programs. Early Head Start programs serve families with children from birth to age 3 years.

Since these ages correspond to the period in which an unmarried father tends to be most involved with mother and child, OCSE and the Head Start Bureau regard Early Head Start programs as prime opportunities for collaboration.

Applicants for the fatherhood demonstration grants were required to include "a viable plan to collaborate with the local child support office." Each of the 21 Early Head Start programs awarded a grant have entered into a memorandum of understanding with the local child support office that specifies how the two programs will collaborate to promote the goals of the fatherhood demonstration project.

Each of the 21 Early Head Start programs awarded a grant have entered into a memorandum of understanding with the local child support office that specifies how the two programs will collaborate to promote the goals of the fatherhood demonstration project.

Typically, these agreements provide for the child support staff to train Head Start staff on the child support program, to speak to Head Start parent groups about child support, and to provide on-site private counseling to parents on their child support issues.

If you would like more information, contact John Doyle at (202) 205-4590.☐

Interstate Website Available

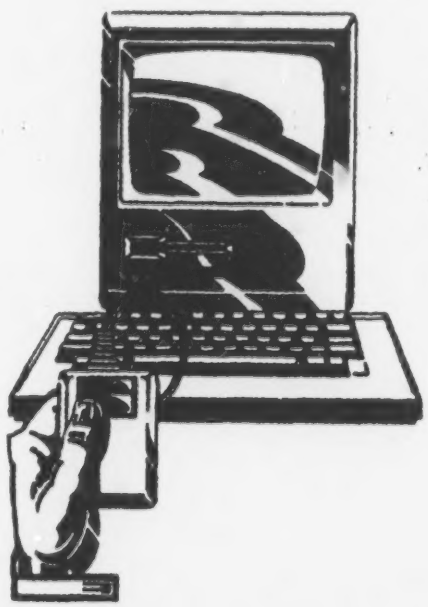
The Eastern Regional Interstate Child Support Enforcement Association (ERICSA) promotes the development of effective family and child support programs through professional training, materials development, and technical assistance.

. . . to improve communication and cooperation among states and jurisdictions for the interstate enforcement of child support obligations.

A special focus of ERICSA is to improve communication and cooperation among states and jurisdictions for the interstate enforcement of child support obligations.

To that end, they have developed a place on their website that is intended for the use of child support workers within the interstate arena. For example, a worker in one state who is having difficulty moving forward with an action in another state can post a question regarding procedures, local statutes, rules, or practices.

Any other worker can respond. If others also respond, a discussion can ensue. We encourage states to take advantage of this resource. The address for the site is: http://www.ericsa.org/interstateforum.htm.☐



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement
Division of Consumer Services
Mail Stop OCSE/DCS
370 L'Enfant Promenade
Washington D.C. 20447

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Return this sheet to above address if
☐ you do not want to receive this material
☐ a change of address is needed:
indicate change, including zip code.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Administration for
Children and Families
Permit No. G-717

SMITH, KAREN
ERIC/CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTER/UNIV OF IL
51 GERTY DR
CHAMPAIGN IL 61820-7453

Child Support Report

Plan Ahead for OCSE's . . .

11th National Training Conference

This year's conference will be held in Arlington, VA at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City Hotel, September 10 – 12, 2001.

These conferences are unique in focusing on practical information and techniques that can improve managers and caseworkers job performance. Sample workshops from last year's conference:

- How to enhance meetings through video conferencing;
- Facilitation skills;
- Integrating internet solutions into child support enforcement statewide systems;
- The changing faces of security and privacy;
- Certification for CSE workers;
- Issues of concern to America's fathers;
- Federal offset programs and passport denial;
- Data reliability audits; and
- Effective presentations.

Plan now to be at this year's training conference. Contact OCSE's Bertha Hammett at (202) 401-5292.☐

Child Support Report
Vol. XXIII No. 3
March 2001

Child Support Report is a publication of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services.

Acting Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Diann Dawson

Acting Commissioner, OCSE
Frank Fuentes

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax (202) 205-5614
Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

CSR is published for information purposes only. No official endorsement of any practice, publication, or individual by the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Child Support Enforcement is intended or should be inferred.

Internet:
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/index.html

Permission to reprint articles is granted. Acknowledging **CSR** is appreciated.⊕

If you have enjoyed this issue of ***Child Support Report,*** *please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*

Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement Vol. XXIII, No. 4, April 2001

Expedited Paternity Establishment In Maine

Over the past decade, and despite a growing caseload, Maine has reduced its backlog of cases requiring paternity establishment by more than two-thirds. In 1991, the State had a backlog of 9,500 paternity cases out of a total caseload of 55,000. Now, with 61,000 total cases, the paternity backlog stands at just 2,900 cases.

Maine's Expedited Paternity Establishment Project has used three key tools to accomplish this.

- A specialized administrative paternity establishment procedure;
- Staff paternity specialists; and
- An automated system that prompts appropriate processing of paternity cases.

Administrative Procedure

The centerpiece of Maine's Expedited Paternity Establishment Project is an administrative procedure for the establishment of paternity. Designed to permit easy transfer to the courts of default and contested cases, the expedited procedure enables many cases to be resolved completely within an administrative process that emphasizes the importance of due process.

The process begins with "in-hand" one-time-only personal service. With this step completed, the paternity case can be transferred to court, should the need arise, without the necessity of additional service of process. Once served, the putative father has 20 days to deny paternity, acknowledge paternity, or request genetic testing. If he fails to respond, the case is transferred to District Court for entry of a default paternity order.

If the putative father admits paternity, he is offered an opportunity to acknowledge paternity, and a support order is established administratively. If he asks for genetic testing, that is provided. If a high probability of paternity is demonstrated, he is offered the opportunity to acknowledge paternity, followed by an administrative order of support.

Designed to permit easy transfer to the courts of default and contested cases, the expedited procedure enables many cases to be resolved completely within an administrative process that emphasizes the importance of due process.

Genetic testing that results in exclusion requires that the Department file a motion in District Court for a finding of nonpaternity. Contested cases and those in which the putative father fails to appear for genetic testing also are transferred to District Court.

Child support agents without the assistance of attorneys generally carry out these procedures. Child support agents may even appear in court to present for the agency. Agency attorneys become involved only in contested cases and complex cases where points of law must be argued.

Paternity Specialists

At this time, the agency segments its caseload. Paternity is considered to be a specialty, with designated staff assigned responsibility for these cases. Currently, there is a staff of 15 statewide.

Continued on page 2, "Maine."

E 9 3 0 1 2 1 6 2

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Inside

Big Eight Plus One States Meet.....3
Federal Agency Employer Services.....6

Maine

Continued from page 1.

Automated System

The State's automated system also comes into play, tracking and structuring the processing of paternity cases. Clerks, rather than support agents, track and follow up on routine matters such as arrival of affidavits, freeing agents to focus on more important matters.

The backlog continues to decline as the State draws nearer to its goal of establishing paternity in all cases within one year of the child's birth or location of the putative father.

With 150 to 200 new paternity cases each month—which represents one-half of Maine's new case openings each month—the backlog continues to decline as the State draws nearer to its goal of establishing paternity in all cases within one year of the child's birth or location of the putative father.

In addition to these gains, improvements in Maine's in-hospital paternity acknowledgment process have resulted in a significant increase in in-hospital acknowledgments. As a result, the agency expects to see a gradual reduction in the proportion of new cases requiring paternity establishment.

If you would like more information about Maine's establishment of paternity through its system of administrative process, contact Gerald Lindsay, Assistant Director of Maine's Division of Support Enforcement and Recovery, at (207) 287-2843.☐

Delaware's "Child Support Information Nights" Increase Customers Access to Services

The Delaware Division of Child Support hosts semi-annual events titled "Child Support Information Nights" to increase customer access to services. The events are held outside of regular business hours, from 5 to 7 in the evening, to give customers an opportunity to resolve case-specific issues they have been unable to resolve through daily business hours.

CSE Specialists with computers connected by modem to the State caseload database are on hand to assist customers and to educate them about the process. The Director and other senior officials also attend the events to offer customers their assistance.

Child Support Information Nights began as a pilot project in October of 1998 in Delaware's largest county, New Castle. In addition to a mass mailing, newspaper ads and community flyers informed customers of the opportunity to seek information about their cases during evening hours.

The events . . . give customers an opportunity to resolve case-specific issues they have been unable to resolve through daily business hours.

The events were so successful that they were quickly made an ongoing part of Delaware's services in all counties. From 100 to 200 customers typically show up for these evening sessions. A suggestion box is available at the registration table, and comments to date have been very positive. Customers appreciate the convenience of being able to access staff during off-hours.

If you would like more information, contact Nicole Cunningham at (302) 577-4815 X 259.☐

Big Eight Plus One States Meet in San Antonio

The "Big Eight Plus One" states (California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and New Jersey) met March 19 – 21 in San Antonio, Texas, to share information about their programs, review noteworthy activities, highlight successes, and showcase promising practices.

OCSE Acting Commissioner Frank Fuentes delivered opening remarks to the 80 participants, who represented a cross-section of senior state child support managers and other key officials.

Mr. Fuentes reviewed the history of the initiative and its accomplishments, commented on its value as a high level forum and communications network, and emphasized the common and state-specific projects Big Eight Plus One states have undertaken to address key issues.

He also recognized and acknowledged the rich body of knowledge and experience available in states that are not part of the Big Eight Plus One, saying that "their contributions in the form of working models and best practices are a necessary part of our efforts to be successful with this project."

Texas Attorney General John Cornyn . . . highlighted a $130,250 collection made possible by the the new Financial Institution Data Match program.

Non-Big Eight Plus One state presenters came from Colorado, Connecticut, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

In a luncheon address, Texas Attorney General John Cornyn described recent efforts in Texas to improve the child support enforcement program and highlighted a $130,250 collection made possible by the the new Financial Institution Data Match program.

Plenary sessions featured state program updates, interstate policy, Financial Institution Data Match, State Disbursement Units, Hispanic/Latino initiatives, Special Improvement Project grants, and issues for large jurisdictions, while small group discussions covered such issues as undistributed collections, medical support, fatherhood, staffing standards, and managing performance.

New York State child support director Margo Bean remarked on the wealth of good information available to attendees during both formal and informal sessions. "The importance of communication in initiatives of this magnitude," she said, "cannot be overstated as an ingredient for success."

Pennsylvania child support director Dan Richard echoed that sentiment, adding, "the interaction and information shared will play a major role in facilitating the collection of support in interstate cases."

Participants shared their experiences and the lessons learned with each other in an interactive environment and took part in coordinated planning sessions to develop and refine projects designed to meet the common needs of states with large caseloads. An important requirement of the projects, which focus on problem solving, is that they must harmonize with the broad child support program goals of attaining financial and emotional support for children and families.

If you would like more information about the conference, contact Dan Fascione, Director of OCSE's Big Eight Plus One Initiative, at (215) 686-3724.□

OCSE Puts Two Web-Based Training Courses on Internet

In partnership with the Graduate School in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, OCSE has converted two of its computer-based training courses (CD-ROM) to web-based training (WBT). The courses, Child Support Enforcement Orientation, and Processing Interstate Cases/UIFSA, are now accessible via Internet on OCSE's National Electronic Child Support Resource System.

The intent in introducing the web-based training format to the child support enforcement community is to make training more accessible to our state partners. To review either of these WBT courses and to see the advances being made in distance learning, log on to this URL address:
http://ocse.acf.dhhs.gov/necsrpub/training/index.html.

If you have questions or would like more information about the new WBT training courses, contact Charlene Butler at OCSE's National Training Center at (202) 401-5091 or by email at cbutler@acf.dhhs.gov.□

2001 Conference Calendar

April

17-18 *OCSE State Self-Assessment Workshop,* Claridge Hotel, Chicago, IL, Myles Schlank (202) 401-9329. By Invitation Only.

18-20 *North Dakota Family Support Council's Annual Child Support Enforcement Training Conference,* Holiday Inn, Bismarck, ND, Colin Barstad (701) 662-5374.

23-25 *Spring Workshops on Child Support Enforcement Systems: "Seventh Inning Stretch—Polishing Your Game,"* Gateway Hotel, Crystal City, VA, Kathy McCaughin (202) 260-6785.

23-25 NCSEA *For-Attorneys-Only Training Seminar,* Spring Sidebar in Reno, Silver Legacy Hotel, Reno NV, Carol Henry (202) 624-8180.

May

1-3 *California Family Support Council Quarterly Meeting,* Embassy Suites, South Lake Tahoe, CA, Noanne St. Jean (559) 582-3211 X 2403.

2-4 *North Carolina Child Support Council Conference,* Adams Mark Hotel, Charlotte, NC, Kathryn Foley (910) 646-1791.

3-6 *Children's Right Council 13th National Conference,* Holiday Inn, Bethesda, MD, (202) 547-6227.

15-17 *6th Bi-Regional Interstate Task Force Conference,* TBA, Seattle, WA, David Stillman (360) 664-5050. For states in Regions IX and X only.

20-24 *ERICSA Annual Training Conference and Exposition,* Opryland Hotel, Nashville, TN, Sara McCollum (413) 784-1025 X 21001.

20-25 *ACF Users' Group Meeting,* Marriott Downtown, Des Moines, IA, Robin Rushton (202) 690-1244. State and federal staff only. No vendors.

28-30 *Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership (NPCL) 3rd Annual International Fatherhood Conference,* Sheraton Atlanta Hotel, Atlanta, GA, Charleen Meeks (888) 528-6725 toll free or (202) 822-6725.

June

3-6 *National Council of Child Support Directors Annual Conference and Business Meeting,* Marriott Hotel, Willamsburg, VA, Peggy Friendenberg (804) 692-1476.

3-6 *Colorado Family Support Council Annual Training Conference,* Beaver Run, Breckenridge, CO, Dee Price-Sanders (720) 947-5000.

5-7 *Mid West HUB Administration for Children and Families Tribal Conference,* Mystic Lake Casino and Conference Center, Prior Lake, MN, Sally Kolanowski (312) 353-7073.

7-8 *The National Fatherhood Initiative's 4th Annual Summit on Fatherhood: Broadening the Reach,* Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill, Washington DC, Elaine Sherman (301) 948-0599.

12-13 *OCSE Locate/Safeguarding Work Group Meeting,* TBA, Washington, DC, Eileen Brooks (202) 401-5369. By Invitation Only.

13-15 *Indiana Child Support Alliance Annual Training Conference,* Raddison Star Plaza, Merriville, IN, Patricia Perkins (317) 232-4922.

July

10-12 *South Dakota Office of Child Support Enforcement Training Conference,* Ramkota Inn, Pierre, SD, Carmin Sommer (605) 773-3641.

27 *Kansas Child Support Enforcement Association 2001 Conference,* Holiday Inn Holidome and Convention Center, Topeka, KS, Sara Wilson (316) 429-3014.

August

12-16 *NCSEA 50th Annual Conference and Exposition,* Hilton New York, New York, NY, Carol Henry (202) 624-8180.

September

10-12, *OCSE 11th National Child Support Enforcement Training Conference,* Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, VA, Bertha Hammett (202) 5292 or Isabelle Howes (202) 314-3471.□

Pennsylvania Judge Finds Alternative to Incarceration

By: Gary W. Kline

Montgomery County (Norristown) Pennsylvania Administrative Judge Rhonda Lee Daniele has developed an effective way to deal with delinquent child support payors who appear before her court. Through her program, a defendant is given the opportunity to get out of the county jail by agreeing to remain at a wage attached job and to increase payments towards the support owed for his child.

It's an approach that has proven to be extremely successful for the children who are owed support. Collections from Judge Daniele's program have exceeded $50,000 in just the past eight months.

A defendant is given the opportunity to get out of the county jail by agreeing to remain at a wage attached job and to increase payments towards the support owed for his child.

The program began when the Montgomery County Domestic Relations Department alerted Judge Daniele to a case in which everyone but the child who was owed support seemed to be getting paid. A defendant, the Judge was told, had been incarcerated for six months for non-support. When he became eligible, he quickly enrolled in the jail's work release program.

The Montgomery County Jail charges its occupants for room and board when they are working, so that amount was deducted from the defendant's earnings, leaving a balance insufficient to pay his support obligation. In addition, during his incarceration, an IRS intercept paid money to the State that was owed for a prior period when the plaintiff was receiving public assistance.

The defendant was brought before Judge Daniele, who offered to release him from jail for the remaining period of his sentence (four months) in exchange for an increased payment towards his child support arrears.

The condition: If any payment was even one day late or one dollar short during the four months, he would be sent back to jail immediately.

He kept his agreement, and since then, a full-time staff position has had to be created to monitor the 50 or more cases that are in the program at any given time. Statistics show a steady increase in payments on the same cases in year to year comparisons from defendants who participate in this program.

The criteria for inclusion in the program are:

- At least a six-month sentence must be imposed;
- The purge amount should not be less than ten percent of the total arrears due, or a minimum of $1,000; and
- The defendant must be enrolled in the work release program and have paid a minimum of six child support payments.

The success of the program has prompted Judge Daniele to incorporate it into the daily hearings for the other five family court judges.

For more information on this alternative program, contact Ms. Erica Higgins, Assistant Parental Support Officer, at EHIGGINS@Mongcopa.org.□

Gary Kline is the Director of the Montgomery County, Pennsylvania child support program.

OCSE's Federal Agency Employer Services Initiative

By: Carol Callahan and Nancy Benner

The OCSE Employer Services work group continues its Federal Agency Initiative to showcase the Federal Government as a "model employer" in promoting and facilitating the establishment and enforcement of child support.

Employer Services' activities on behalf of states and State Disbursement Units (SDUs) have included working with the following federal agencies.

Social Security Administration (SSA)

The focus with SSA has been on assisting them in improving their procedures regarding release of a lump sum disability benefit when an income withholding order has been received against the benefit payment. Recently, for example, the Takoma Washington Division of Child Support sent an income withholding order for a noncustodial parent's disability benefit to SSA, but because the claim for liability was still being investigated, SSA returned the order to the child support agency.

Once the investigation was completed, however, SSA failed to notify the child support agency that monies were now available to be attached. As a result, a large, lump sum SSA benefit payment was nearly sent to the noncustodial parent, who was $13,000 in arrears for child support.

Employer Services is working with SSA to enhance payment procedures so that the next time this kind of situation occurs, SSA will notify the child support office that initially sent the income withholding order. As Barbara Mattson, Support Enforcement Officer II in Takoma, Washington, commented: "A mechanism should be in place at Social Security to ensure that withholding orders on retroactive benefits will be honored without fail."

Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Employer Services has worked with USDA on their policy for implementing multiple income withholding orders against a noncustodial parent when disposable income does not cover all the orders. Until recently, USDA

Barbara Mattson

was still following the policy of "first-come, first-served." They have now changed their procedures and are honoring second or multiple orders for current support against their employees.

According to Judy Weber of USDA's Rural Development Field Services Branch in St. Louis, "Often, we have multiple orders for different custodial families to process against one employee's salary. . . . [so] the amount withheld for a child support order can change, depending on the total orders processed." New USDA procedures also include a new letter to be sent to any state that will be receiving a reduced amount of child support because of a multiple allocation situation.

Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS)

The OCSE work group negotiated two locations within the DFAS Garnishment Department for states to contact for redirection of all DFAS child support payments (and spousal support, if appropriate) to SDUs. This information was sent to all states in a Dear Colleague letter. Employer Services also disseminated a list of DFAS service branch addresses for child support workers to use when requesting employment verification for service personnel. This list also was sent to all states in a Dear Colleague letter.

Continued on page 7, "Employer."

Child Support Children First

Employer

Continued from page 6.

Judy Weber

Employer Services is now supporting DFAS's move to send child support payments (both voluntary allotments and income withholding orders) electronically. Currently, only the Marines are sending child support payments electronically, but the DFAS pay centers for voluntary allotments are very close to converting from paper checks to electronic payments.

Publications

To assist child support workers, Employment Services produced *Working with Federal Agencies as Employers,* which was sent to all states. This publication includes detailed information on sending income withholding orders to federal agencies, redirecting child support payments from federal agencies to SDUs, identifying Treasury checks, and dealing with federal agencies as they begin to send electronic child support payments (EFT/EDI).

Another Employer Services' publication, *The ABCs of Child Support: Federal Agency Overview,* was produced for federal agency payroll and human resources personnel to help them understand new hire reporting and income withholding for child and medical support. This publication has been distributed at payroll conferences and seminars sponsored by the Federal Office of Personnel Management.

If you have questions or would like more information, contact Carol Callahan at (202) 401-6969.☐

Carol Callahan is OCSE's Director of Employer Services. Nancy Benner is staff to the Employer Services Project.

New Hire Data Useful

Texas recently conducted a study to independently verify the accuracy and value of data provided by the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH). The Office of the Attorney General's Child Support Division (CSD) randomly chose a sample of 220 NDNH matches that were based on new hire (W4) data submitted by employers from around the country.

State staff called the employers identified in each match to verify the information provided in each data element. The study shows that the NDNH provides accurate and important information to Texas caseworkers.

In 95 percent of the matches, the employer's Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN), city, and state were provided and were correct. In 97 percent of the matches, the non-custodial parent's (NCP) name and Social Security number (SSN) were provided and were correct.

In addition, the survey verified that in 75 percent of the cases the NCP had worked at one time for the employer provided by the NDNH.

"Clearly, this has become our best collection tool."

.....Texas child support director Howard Baldwin.

The NDNH is intended to locate the more mobile individuals, who sometimes end up not working any hours for the employer who reported them, or do so only for a short period of time. But in this instance, and in 63 percent of the cases, the individual was still employed by the firm that provided the NDNH data.

By studying the accuracy of NDNH data and sharing the results, Texas has increased its caseworkers' trust in new hire data. The State also has shown that automated wage withholding can produce dramatic results in a short amount of time.

Howard Baldwin, Deputy Attorney General for Child Support and Texas IV-D Director stated, "In the past year and a half, the Texas IV-D program has seen dramatic increases in collections generated by income withholding through the use of national and State new hire data. In State fiscal year 2000, collections from income withholding were $350,000,000. Through the first six months of this year, we are at $256,000,000. Clearly, this has become our best collection tool." ☐

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement
Division of Consumer Services
Mail Stop OCSE/DCS
370 L'Enfant Promenade
Washington D.C. 20447

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Return this sheet to above address if
☐ you do not want to receive this material
☐ a change of address is needed:
indicate change, including zip code.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Administration for Children and Families
Permit No. G-717

SMITH, KAREN
ERIC/CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTER/UNIV OF IL
51 GERTY DR
CHAMPAIGN IL 61820-7453

Child Support Report

HHS Outreach Fact Sheets Available On Internet

61820-7453 46

Two HHS Fact Sheets of interest to the child support community are available on the Internet at www.hhs.gov/news.

The first describes the "HHS Role in Child Support Enforcement" and includes information on efforts to promote responsible fatherhood, and improve paternity establishment.

The second fact sheet, "HHS and the President's Faith-Based and Community Initiative," reviews the President's executive order and provides background on the Department's efforts to reach out to these communities.☐

Child Support Report
Vol. XXIII, No. 4
April 2001

Child Support Report is a publication of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services.

Acting Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Diann Dawson

Acting Commissioner, OCSE
Frank Fuentes

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax (202) 205-5614
Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

CSR is published for information purposes only. No official endorsement of any practice, publication, or individual by the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Child Support Enforcement is intended or should be inferred.

Internet:
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/index.html

Permission to reprint articles is granted.
Acknowledging CSR is appreciated.

If you have enjoyed this issue of ***Child Support Report,*** *please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*

Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement Vol. XXIII, No. 5, May 2001

Testing Alternative Methods of Long Arm Service of Process in Florida

By: Vehu Knapp

In September 1999, Florida was awarded a Special Improvement Project Grant from OCSE to test alternative methods of long arm service of process. The study included a total of 638 cases with an equal number of cases being forwarded to the private vendor and to an out-of-state sheriff. The goal was to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of using a private vendor compared to the more traditional approach of using an out-of-state sheriff.

The study team used demographics consistent with Florida's population and also took into consideration other demographics such as urban/rural and public assistance/nonassistance to ensure that the project results could be replicated by other child support programs nationwide. The cases handled by the vendor and the sheriff also contained similar location information.

Florida's comparative study demonstrated in this instance that using a private vendor represented the most cost-effective and efficient approach to long-arm service of process.

The study looked at three key performance measures: the length of time it took for the process server to send a return of service form to the child support contract attorney or to the CSE service center; the cost associated with each type of process server; and whether service of process was successful.

Findings

Length of time for service: Cases assigned to both groups came back in approximately 67 days, but there was an advantage in using the private vendor. The CSE worker had access to the vendor's secure web site and could monitor the vendor's progress on an almost real-time basis. In most cases involving the out-of-state sheriff, the CSE worker had to wait until receipt of the returned service of process form to determine status.

Cost: The study showed that it was more expensive to use a private process server than a sheriff in another state, although the vendor's higher cost was offset by a better rate of success.

Success: The private vendor achieved an 11 percent higher success rate than the sheriff. This higher rate of success, when used to project the increased collections that could result, justifies the initial increased costs of using a private vendor. (Cost comparisons took into account the level of convenience that is provided by use of a private vendor.)

There are, for example, potential savings in staff time, long distance charges, and mail expense. Consequently, it became necessary to calculate a dollar value for these factors and add them to the overall cost of using out-of-state sheriffs' offices.

The study also found that the private vendor statistically outperformed the out-of-state sheriff, regardless of whether the service of process was easy or difficult to achieve.

Continued on page 2, "Florida."

ISSN 0730-1162

U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Inside

Maryland Paternity Opportunity Program.....4
Iowa's Process Improvement Teams.....5

Florida

Continued from page 1.

"Easy" cases were those in which the custodial parent was not on public assistance and a telephone number and employer address were available for the noncustodial parent when service of process was requested. The vendor was successful 79 percent of the time in these cases, compared to 71 percent of the time for the sheriff.

For "hard" cases (no public assistance, telephone number, or employer address), the vendor was successful 56 percent of the time, compared to 45 percent for the sheriff.

In the end, after controlling for potential bias, Florida's comparative study demonstrated in this instance that using a private vendor represented the most cost-effective and efficient approach to long-arm service of process.

If you would like more information about this study, contact Velva Knapp at (850) 410-3244.□

Velva Knapp is Program Administrator, Florida Department of Revenue.

Living Conditions of Children

Children Living with Both Biological Parents

The proportion of children living in a traditional nuclear family with their biological mother and father increased from 51 percent in 1991 to 56 percent in 1996. The nuclear family is defined as one that has a mother and a father and their biological children, without any other people in the household.

Living with Stepparents or Adoptive Parents

In 1996, 5.2 million children lived with one biological parent and either a stepparent or adoptive parent, up from 4.5 million in 1991.

Altogether in 1996, 71 percent of children lived in two-parent households, either with their biological parents or with stepparents or adoptive parents.

Living Only With Their Father

In 1996, 3 percent of children lived only with their father.

Living with Neither Parent

In 1996, 4 percent of children lived with neither parent.

Living with Grandparents

In 1996, about 6 percent of all children (4.1 million) lived in a household with one or both of their grandparents.□

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1996 Panel of the Survey of Income and Program Participation.

A Census Bureau Profile of the Nation's Women

Marriage

Last year, about one-half of women 15 years and over (51 percent) were married and living with their spouse; 25 percent had never married; 13 percent were divorced or separated; and 10 percent were widowed.

Education

Twenty-four percent of women hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Among women age 25 to 29, 30 percent have at least a bachelor's degree. Eighty-four percent of women age 25 and over have a high school diploma.

Employment

The majority of women (61 percent) 16 years and over were in the civilian labor force. About 6 in 10 (58 percent) of employed women age 16 and over worked in administrative support, including clerical (24 percent), professional specialty (18 percent), and service jobs—except private household—(16 percent). About 14 percent (1 in 7) of employed women worked in executive, administrative, or managerial occupations.

Earnings

The median earnings of women 15 years and over who worked full time, year-round in 1999 was $26,300, which was 72 percent of the median earnings of their male counterparts ($36,500).

Percentage of Population

In the United States, females outnumber males, according to 2000 estimates, by 6 million, 140 million to 134 million. The ratio of males to females declines with age. In 2000, the male-to-female ratio was 105 males for every 100 females for the population under age 20. This drops to 98 males for every 100 women for ages 20 to 44; 95 for ages 45 to 54; 91 for ages 55 to 64; 83 for ages 65 to 74; 70 for ages 75 to 84; and 50 for ages 85 and over.□

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Some Findings From U. S. Population Profile

Children in Two-Parent Families Fare Better

Children in two-parent families fare better developmentally than children in single-parent families, according to a recent study based on data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). Among the problems associated with children of single parents are low measures of academic achievement, increased likelihood of dropping out of high school, and early childbearing.

Diminished contact with the noncustodial parent can result in a loss of emotional support and supervision from adults. Children in single parent families generally have a lower economic standard of living and more frequently participate in government assistance programs than do children from two-parent families. The SIPP indicates that all of these circumstances have a cumulative effect on the way children grow up and how prepared they are for young adulthood.

Custodial Parent Employment

More custodial parents worked, and participation in public programs declined. Between 1993 and 1997, the Current Population Survey (CPS) found that the proportion of custodial parents employed in full-time, year-round jobs increased from 46 percent to 51 percent. At the same time the proportion participating in at least one public assistance program declined from 41 percent to 34 percent. Mothers with infants were almost twice as likely to be in the labor force in 1998 as they were in 1976.

Receipt of Child Support Payments

In 1997, more custodial parents were receiving full payments and fewer received partial payments, according to the CPS. Of the 7.9 million parents with child support agreements or awards, about 7 million were due payments in 1997. Of these, about two-thirds reported receiving either part or full payment, statistically unchanged from 1993. However, the proportion of custodial parents receiving all payments they were due increased from 35 percent to 41 percent, while those receiving partial payments fell from 35 percent to 27 percent.□

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Population Profile of the United States."

OCSE Training Needs Assessment

OCSE's National CSE Training Work Group and Technical Assistance Work Group recently collaborated to design a needs assessment instrument, which was disseminated to the state child support programs by the National Council of Child Support Directors.

The purpose of the 2001 Needs Assessment was to determine what types of problems the states are having with program issues, and what types of training /technical assistance (T/TA) they want OCSE to provide. Of the 54 jurisdictions that administer the CSE program, 40 responded to the assessment.

Ted White, an attorney with the Texas Child Support Division and Co-Chair of the National CSE Training Work Group, volunteered to develop a database that categorized the information and collated responses. The results of the 2001 Needs Assessment indicate concerns by states in five major incentive areas: paternity establishment, order establishment, current collections, collections on arrears, and cost effectiveness.

To refine state T/TA needs in these areas, Needs Assessment Follow Up Teams, consisting of both state and federal CSE staff, were established to:

- Clarify and follow up on specific training and technical assistance needs that states indicated OCSE could assist with through the provision of T/TA; and
- Develop preliminary national T/TA options and/or recommendations for OCSE consideration.

Although policy issues will be noted as they arise, the groups' focus will be on developing T/TA approaches to address the states' specific concerns and requests.

Through the Follow Up Teams, OCSE also expects to discover if states are using existing T/TA products that are available through OCSE to meet ongoing state needs. Presently, OCSE is examining ways to market and promote existing T/TA material. For example, OCSE designed and developed a self-instructional computer based training course titled *Interstate Case Processing/UIFSA*, and provides hands on guidance for corrective action planning and statistical sampling in self-assessment.

A final report will incorporate the Follow Up Teams' recommendations, will be shared with the child support enforcement community at large, and will be posted on the National Electronic Child Support Resource System.

For more information contact Charlene Butler at (202) 401-5091 or Myles Schlank at (202) 401-9329.□

Maryland Paternity Opportunity Program Provides Opportunities for Welfare-to-Work Recipients

In September, 1998 the Maryland Child Support Enforcement Administration received a federal Special Improvement Project (SIP) grant for a project titled the "Paternity Opportunity Program" (POP). The objectives of the project were to increase the number and percentage of in-hospital paternity affidavits signed and to provide work opportunities for four recipients of Maryland's Welfare-to-Work program, in which participants learn how to write a resume, look for a job, and interview.

Six candidates (5 women and 1 man) were selected for the POP program, though only four worked at any one time. After selection, the individuals were trained in the areas of child support, paternity establishment, and professional conduct. The University of Maryland School of Social Work provided child support training through a child support 101 course. The Baltimore City Department of Social Services provided customer relations and professional conduct training, including learning how to maintain a job and how to be an effective employee. The Maryland Child Support Administration provided paternity establishment training.

The POP participants did very well and demonstrated a sense of pride and responsibility in their work.

To give participants a variety of experiences, work assignments included Mercy Medical System, Harbor Hospital, Maryland General, Sinai, Prince George's County, Holy Cross, the University of Maryland Medical System, and Johns Hopkins. Upon completion of the project, three of the six POP participants were offered full-time positions. The number and percentage of in-hospital paternity affidavits signed while POP participants were employed increased, but not significantly.

There were some problems with POP participants' job-related behavior, leading project staff to recommend additional up-front training in professional conduct and job maintenance skills. One participant tested positively for drugs and was dismissed from the program.

In addition, after an initial good beginning, some employees began to arrive late to work and to leave early without notifying their supervisors (supervisors were not on site regularly). This was corrected when supervisors discussed the importance of work schedules with the participants and began to make additional site visits.

Overall, however, the POP participants did very well and demonstrated a sense of pride and responsibility in their work.

If you would like more information about this SIP project, contact Wanda Levenson at (410) 767-8842.□

Iowa's Process Improvement Teams

In 1996, to meet the goals established in the Bureau's strategic plan, Iowa's child support program management began to put into practice one of the principles learned in earlier Quality Improvement Training: statewide process improvement teams.

Goals included raising the percentage of cases with established orders from 72 percent to 90 percent by the year 2000, fully implementing welfare reform in all the agency's processes, and significantly improving customer service ratings.

To meet these goals, the process improvement teams needed to address several issues: lack of uniformity among the State's regional offices, inadequate communication and information sharing, unclear performance expectations, inconsistent productivity, and automated systems. Thirteen Policy Improvement Teams (or "PIT Crews") were established, each specializing in one of the following processes:

- Case set-up;
- Interstate;
- Income withholding;
- Special enforcement (all enforcement methods other than income withholding);
- PC team – system development;
- Medical support;
- Review and adjustment;
- Establishment (including paternity);
- Customer service and case resolution;
- Legal (identified issues that didn't fall within a process, such as forms);
- Guidelines (use and interpretation of Iowa's child support guidelines);
- Leadership (supervisors or managers) and
- Special projects (everything left over, such as mail).

Each team consisted of two field staff, a supervisor, an attorney, a policy representative from central office and one of the three regional project managers. Members serve for at least a year but no more than three years. Teams set their own meeting schedules. Field staff who perform a specific team task (e.g., case set-up) are considered members of the larger statewide process team and can provide input to the corresponding PIT Crew.

A group of Regional Project Managers (originally one but now two from each region) provides oversight and facilitates the teams' work, maintaining liaison between their assigned teams and agency management.

In addition, the Regional Project Managers train teams, see that they meet regularly, track their work, and provide facilitation and direction as needed.

Customer satisfaction surveys show improved customer relations.

The Process Improvement Teams have provided help in a variety of areas, including:

- Reducing the backlog of policy issues that needed to be addressed. Solutions were submitted via "process improvement forms" for management approval;
- Identifying best practices for each process, including developing linkages to supporting resources;
- Assisting with system certification by developing new computer screens and reviewing systems development in their process area;
- Developing a centralized customer service unit; and
- Identifying training needs.

Results

- The agency met its statewide goal of 90 percent of cases in court-ordered status by the end of 2000;
- Customer satisfaction surveys show improved customer relations; and
- Members of the PIT Crews have improved their program knowledge, and their leadership and communication skills.

Funding

Set-up costs were $30,000 (facility rent, trainer fees, travel expenses, and supplies). The annual cost of the ongoing program is about $200,000.

Replication Advice

Says Rebecca Seyffer, Regional Project Manager for the Child Support Recovery Unit, "Make sure managers block out time for staff to participate in teams. Reduce their workload at home if they are devoting a lot of time to the team."

For more information, contact Rebecca Seyffer at (319) 388-5524.□

Rebecca S. Seyffer is Regional Project Manager, Child Support Recovery Unit, Davenport Iowa.

Correction: In April's *CSR* the URL address for review of the two web-based courses should have been: http://ocse.acf.dhhs.gov/necsrspub/training/index..html

Marriage Found to be Beneficial to Children

Research shows that childbearing outside of marriage can have serious consequences for children. Children born to unmarried mothers, regardless of the mother's age, are more likely to be poor, to experience more changes in living situations, and to have academic and behavior problems.

Childbearing outside of marriage can have serious consequences for children.

This news comes at a time when births to couples who live together account for current high levels of nonmarital childbearing. Research suggests that patterns of childbearing outside of marriage have changed since 1970 when the overwhelming majority of children (89 percent) were born to married couples. Today a third of all children are born to unmarried parents. "Childbearing hasn't changed as much as marriage," said Kristin A. Moore, Ph.D., president and senior scholar at Child Trends. "Recent declines in the percentage of births to married couples are almost entirely due to an increase in births to cohabiting parents."

The dynamics of nonmarital childbearing have also changed. The public perception is that nonmarital childbearing is the same as teen childbearing. In 1970, half of all nonmarital births were to teenagers. Today that has dramatically changed. In 1999, teens accounted for less than one-third of all children born to unmarried mothers. Women ages 20 and older accounted for more than two-thirds of all children born to unmarried mothers. Women in their early 20s also had the highest rate of nonmarital births (72.3 per 1,000).

The report also finds that after increasing dramatically for several decades, the nonmarital birth rate has declined slightly since 1994, and the percentage of births to unmarried women has plateaued. □

Source: Child Trends Research Brief

Effective Date for Final Rule on National Medical Support Notice

The Federal Register published a notice on January 26, 2001 (66FR 8074) that delayed the effective date for 60 days, until March 27, 2001, of the final rule for the National Medical Support Notice (NMSN) that was published December 27, 2000 (65 FR 82154).

The delay allowed Department officials the opportunity for further review and consideration of new regulations.

The delay ended March 27, 2001, and the final rule is effective as of that date.

The delay ended March 27, 2001, and the final rule is effective as of that date.

The final rule implemented provisions of the Child Support Performance and Incentives Act of 1998. These provisions require state child support enforcement agencies, under title IV of the Social Security Act, to enforce the health care coverage provision in a child support order, and to use the NMSN to aid enforcement.

The Department of Labor published a similar notice of a 60-day delay of the effective date of their final rule on medical support. That final rule is also effective as of March 27, 2001.

The action transmittal (OCSE-AT-01-02) for the final rule and its attached OCSE and DOL Federal Register texts can be downloaded from the OCSE website at:

www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/pol/at-01-02.htm. □

Child Support Children First

California, Florida, Michigan Faith-Based Initiatives

California State Faith-Based Initiative

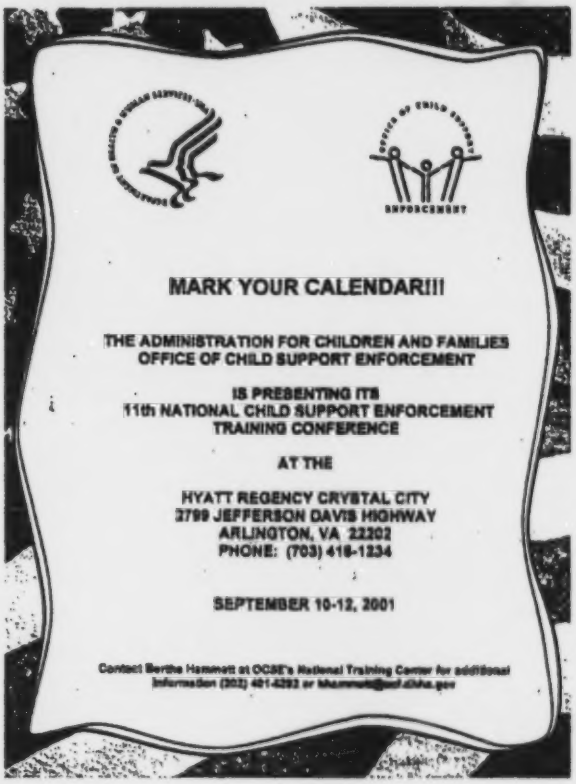
In California, 20 faith-based organizations have been awarded grants totaling $5 million. More than 230 churches and other faith-based organizations applied for the grants, which are part of a new State Faith-Based Initiative and are intended to provide job training and other services to low-income and disadvantaged individuals. The pool of potential clients includes homeless men and women, substance abusers, youth, limited English-speaking persons, and noncustodial parents.

Florida Urban Renewal and Faith-Based Initiatives

In Florida, the Governor has announced a $500,000 grant through the Department of Children and Families to help the Bethel Family Life Center deliver needed services to the residents of the Frenchtown community in Tallahassee. The goal of this grant is to empower local citizens to foster change in their neighborhoods by enlisting them as partners in the project of urban renewal.

Michigan Office of Faith Community Liaison

In Michigan, the House Family and Children Services Committee is considering legislation to create an Office of Faith Community Liaison within the Governor's Office. The new office would parallel President Bush's new Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.☐



HHS Blueprint for New Beginnings

HHS priority initiatives from the President's "Blueprint for New Beginnings" includes funds for promoting responsible fatherhood. The budget provides $64 million in 2002 ($315 million over five years) to strengthen the role of fathers in the lives of families.

This initiative will provide competitive grants to faith-based and community organizations that help unemployed or low-income fathers and their families avoid or leave cash welfare, as well as to programs that promote successful parenting and strengthen marriage. The initiative also funds projects of national significance.

Other priority initiatives include strengthening the health care safety net, promoting safe and stable families, encouraging compassion and charitable giving, and supporting maternity group homes.☐

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement
Division of Consumer Services
Mail Stop OCSE/DCS
370 L'Enfant Promenade
Washington D.C. 20447

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Return this sheet to above address if
☐ you do not want to receive this material
☐ a change of address is needed:
indicate change, including zip code.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Administration for Children and Families
Permit No. G-717

SMITH, KAREN
ERIC/CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTER/UNIV OF IL
51 GERTY DR
CHAMPAIGN IL 61820-7453

Child Support Report

OCSE to Hold Child Support Research Conference

OCSE will host a research conference at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel in Arlington, Virginia on June 7 – 8, 2001.

This conference will bring together leading child support administrators, practitioners, and researchers. The goal of the conference is to increase and improve child support research that will be used to shape the future of child support enforcement at the federal, state, and local levels.

Conference objectives include creating a forum for the exchange of information, encouraging more state-level child support research, and generating a child support research agenda.

We invite you to participate with us in this important undertaking.

For more information about the conference, contact Jim Rich at (202) 401-3447. For information about registration, contact Darlene Gregory at (301) 587-1600.☐

Child Support Report
Vol. XXIII No. 5
May 2001

Child Support Report is a publication of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services.

Acting Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
Diann Dawson

Acting Commissioner, OCSE
Frank Fuentes

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax (202) 205-5614
Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

CSR is published for information purposes only. No official endorsement of any practice, publication, or individual by the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Child Support Enforcement is intended or should be inferred.

Internet:
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/index.html
Permission to reprint articles is granted.
Acknowledging **CSR** is appreciated.

If you have enjoyed this issue of ***Child Support Report,*** *please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*

Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement Vol. XXIII, No. 6, June 2001

Finding Funds For Fathers: A Variety of Programs Offer Help

Since the passage of welfare reform, policymakers and practitioners have viewed programs that provide services to noncustodial fathers as critical to helping low-income children escape poverty. Research has shown that many low-income fathers are not part of their children's lives because these fathers lack financial and/or emotional resources to provide for their children.

Research has shown that many low-income fathers are not part of their children's lives because these fathers lack financial and/or emotional resources to provide for their children.

In response to this need, many programs offer noncustodial parents services such as education and training, job placement, counseling, legal and child development advice, and parenting classes. Funds that may be available for work with fathers include:

TANF Funds

TANF funds are perhaps the most flexible of the federal funding sources states can use to support fatherhood programs. Florida has allocated $3 million of its TANF funds to Florida's Commission on Responsible Fatherhood, a State commission that raises awareness of the importance of fatherhood, identifies obstacles that prevent fathers from being involved in their children's lives, and implements successful strategies, such as funding programs, that help fathers become responsible and effective parents.

State Funds

States can combine flexible funding sources to offer services to low-income fathers. The Parents' Fair Share program in Missouri is operated by the Division of Child Support Enforcement and is funded primarily with TANF and State general revenue funds. Some federal child support enforcement funds also are used. Case managers assess the needs of participating fathers and help them ob-

Continued on page 2, "Fathers."

PS 030112

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Inside

Pennsylvania Parenting Program Grants.....3
Illinois Mediation Pilot Project.....5

Fathers

Continued from page 1

tain assistance with training for and finding a job, transportation costs and work-related expenses, housing, medical coverage, and child support cases. The program aims to increase the number of noncustodial parents who are able to support their children and are involved in their children's lives.

Welfare-to-Work Funds

Welfare-to-Work funds, both formula grants to states and competitive grants awarded to local providers, can also be used to provide services to low-income fathers of TANF-eligible children, regardless of whether the children actually receive TANF benefits. The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization has received two competitive WtW grants for its multi-site program. The program's outreach specialists, who are married couples residing in the community, provide one-on-one, home-based, direct services to help low-income noncustodial fathers become more involved in the lives of their children. Intra-personal development is the core of the program's philosophy. Program participants receive intensive case management to help them become responsible fathers.

Child Support Enforcement Funds

A program in Bexar County (San Antonio) Texas uses probation as a tool to help noncustodial parents overcome the barriers that prevent them from supporting their children. Fathers facing incarceration for failure to pay child support are instead offered civil probation with the Child Support Probation Unit, a department of the Bexar County Juvenile Probation Office. Probationers meet with an assigned probation officer to discuss their payment status and the problems that prevent them from paying child support. The assigned probation officer makes necessary referrals to community resources, such as job training and development programs, employers who are seeking workers, counseling programs, and organizations that can assist with visitation issues. About a third of the program funds come from the county's general fund; the remainder comes from child support matching funds.

Collaborative Funding Efforts

The Partners for Fragile Families demonstration projects are local collaborations of community-based organizations, child support enforcement agencies, and faith-based partners designed to help young fathers become more involved with their children and to help mothers and fathers build stronger parenting partnerships. Federal and private funding for this national demonstration will total more than $15 million over three years. The National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership is providing technical assistance for the demonstration.□

Source: Welfare Information Network, "Resources," Vol. 5, No. 1, January 2001. Used with permission.

OCSE Access and Visitation Conference

Forty states were represented at OCSE's recent Child Access and Visitation Conference in Chicago, May 7 – 8, 2001. The conference is an annual national training event for the states' child access and visitation program coordinators, who served as primary presenters of program information and best practices.

Panel topics included supervised visitation programs; innovative ways to serve special populations and families in rural or underserved areas; creative ways to supplement your federal child access grant; working with high-conflict families; what to do when parenting agreements fall apart; establishing performance-based outcomes for local grantees; and child access outreach, public education, and client recruitment efforts.

In addition, several guest speakers addressed the participants in support of access and visitation. Joyce Thomas, ACF Midwest Hub Director, welcomed the participants and urged them to focus their energies on how access and visitation services can be linked to other provider programs and funding sources to enhance outreach.

Frank Fuentes, OCSE's Acting Commissioner, provided the keynote address. Noting that the program served some 50,000 individuals in 1998, he said "the strength of the program is the flexibility it gives to states to test a variety of approaches to access and visitation."

Other speakers included the Honorable Thomas Dudgeon, Presiding Judge in the Domestic Relations Division of the 18th Judicial Circuit Court in Wheaton, Illinois; Representative Andy Dawkins of Minnesota; and the Honorable Susan Snow (retired) of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Domestic Relations Division.□

Pennsylvania Parenting Program Grants

New projects funded by the Pennsylvania Parenting Program will complement existing Federal Access and Visitation grant programs. The new projects will be administered by the Department of Public Welfare and will encourage fathers to participate in their children's lives and to pay child support.

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge has announced $2 million in Pennsylvania Parenting Program grants to six community-based projects to strengthen the role fathers play in the lives of their children.

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge has announced $2 million in Pennsylvania Parenting Program grants to six community-based projects to strengthen the role fathers play in the lives of their children.

"The Pennsylvania Parenting Program represents a new, community-based, grassroots effort on the part of the Commonwealth to recognize the importance of fathers' involvement with their children," said Department of Public Welfare (DPW) Secretary Feather O. Houston.

The six community-based projects will offer parenting services over a wide area of the state, including rural areas. The projects are designed to increase noncustodial parents' involvement with their children and improve their parenting skills; increase payment of child support; provide support services to parents; and unify families.

Pennsylvania's Parenting Program is a key component of the State's Fatherhood Initiative and is designed to encourage fathers to interact positively and meaningfully with their children.

A variety of activities will be offered, such as visitation services, counseling, mediation, parenting plan development, education, job readiness/placement services, and housing assistance. The grants will run through June 30, 2002.

Pennsylvania's Parenting Program is a key component of the State's Fatherhood Initiative and is designed to encourage fathers to interact positively and meaningfully with their children. "A father's involvement—not just financially, but socially and psychologically as well—is a proven factor in enhancing the long-term prospects of a child's ability to become a responsible, caring adult who contributes to his or her family and the community," said Secretary Houston.

Grant Award Recipients

- Allegheny County's University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development **$500,000;**
- The Armstrong County Community Action Agency **$266,144;**
- Butler County's Family Pathways **$499,686;**
- Fayette County's Child Custody Services **$80,000;**
- The Philadelphia County Domestic Relations Division **$460,224;** and
- The York County Kids Now program **$210,946.**

For more information, contact Susan Aspey or Stephanie Suran of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare at (717) 787-4592.□

Nevada Posters

The Nevada Office of Child Support Enforcement and Attorney General's Office have released a series of posters with photographs of and information about parents who have failed to pay child support. The latest is available on the Attorney General's Web site at:
http://ag.state.nv.us.

The posters have helped the State to collect more than $121,000 in past due child support payments since 1996. "We're happy with the success of these posters in helping us locate these hard to find individuals," says Nevada State Welfare Administrator Michael Willden.

The Attorney General's Office has published a brochure entitled, *Tips for Collecting Child Support: Working with the Child Support Enforcement Program*, which answers questions about Nevada child support eligibility, collections, and support enforcement. This brochure also is available on the Attorney General's Web site.□

Fatherhood: A Priority in Dallas Region States

By: Tomasia A. Pinter

All Region VI States (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) are actively pursuing some form of Fatherhood objective.

Texas

The Texas Fatherhood Initiative includes collaboration with the Texas Fragile Families Initiative, referral of noncustodial parents to appropriate workforce development boards, making PAPA (Parenthood and Paternity) Program curriculum available to all secondary schools statwide, and reaching out to the Texas Department of Health Male Invovlement Projects, Head Start programs, and incarcerated parents.

Arkansas

Arkansas staff make presentations at high schools and community organizations on the benefits of establishing paternity and the rights of children and fathers.

Louisiana

Louisiana has worked with a model pre-release program at one of their local State prisons. The fathers participate for 25 weeks in fatherhood group sessions, followed by presentations from child support program staff and Access and Visitation project staff. The goal is to help these fathers, upon their release from prison, to become more responsible about their parenting roles and to take a more active part in their children's lives.

New Mexico

New Mexico child support staff have made presentations at parenting classes, alternative high schools, and fathers support groups, advising them of the rights and responsibilities of parents and of the importance of establishing paternity. The staff also refer individuals for financial assistance, job training and placement, and child support services.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma's child support division has begun a pilot program for families to increase public awareness on Fatherhood issues and to educate teen parents. The program, Dads Make A Difference, is operated in partnership with the State Health Department's Maternal and Child Health Service.

To date, 30 pairs of teen peer educators and eight adult advisors have completed the program. Millwood School District has provided the program to 150 middle school students, while two other school districts will begin teaching the program during the 2002 –2003 school year. Recently, Oklahoma child support and TANF staff met to discuss ways to increase funds through collaboration and to broaden the project's outreach.□

Tomasia Pinter is Program Information Coordinator and Lead for Fatherhood in OCSE's Dallas Regional Office.

New Mexico Human Services Department Honored

The State Human Services Department (HSD) has been selected by the Government Solutions Center (GSC) as a leader in e-government best practices. HSD's Child Support Enforcement Division Web site at childsupport.state.nm.us was selected by the GSC Selection Committee as an E-Gov 2001 Pioneer.

The award will be presented at the E-Gov 2001 conference, held in Washington, DC at the Washington Convention Center, July 9 – 12, 2001.

"New Mexico's new child support interactive Web site will enable child support customers to receive better service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week," said Acting Child Support Enforcement Division Director Helen Nelson.

"We are very excited about this national recognition of the work we have been doing to bring the full array of government services to constituents through the Web," said Deputy Secretary Robin Dozier Otten. "In particular, the Child Support Division's site truly is a pioneering initiative to make services and information more readily available to everyone."

The site allows applications to be filled out online, tells customers where payments are, and accepts payments from parents who owe money. Once finished, it will be able to record most of the data that previously had to be completed through office visits.□

Illinois Mediation Pilot Project Helps Never Married Parent Population

By: Honorable Thomas C. Dudgeon

In September 1998, a new mediation program began in DuPage County Domestic Relations Division Courtroom 2003. While similar to the mediation program in place throughout the Domestic Relations Division, the impetus for this pilot project arose from concerns for a unique population: that of never married parents.

These families often lack the professional and financial resources available to divorcing couples. Never married couples, unlike divorcing couples, have no marital estate to underwrite the costs of mediation and typically cannot afford the cost of the Circuit's mainstream mediation program.

Litigants are usually pro se and are not very sophisticated in advancing their visitation rights.

Yet, children from these families are entitled to the same love and involvement from both parents, as are children of the divorcing population. To allow the issues of visitation and custody to go unaddressed in the never married population because of a lack of finances is unacceptable.

The program is administered by the DuPage County Psychological Services, upon referral and consultation with the Presiding Judge of the Domestic Relations Division and the judge currently assigned to Courtroom 2003. Referrals to this no-cost mediation program can occur in two ways.

. . . provides a long-needed service to a population of families whose visitation concerns have often gone unaddressed.

The first is when a motion for custody or visitation is filed by one of the litigants. If one party is a child support program participant, or if the parties clearly cannot afford the standard domestic relations for-cost mediation program, the couple is referred to no-cost mediation to resolve the dispute.

However, referrals are not limited to this process. When parentage is established, the court asks if any custody or visitation issues exist. If they do, and if the financial criteria are met, the couple is referred to no-cost mediation without filing a special petition for custody or visitation—if they agree to waive this requirement.

The goals are to involve both parents in the child's life as soon as the parent-child relationship is legally established and to treat the noncustodial parent as more than just a financial resource for the child.

The goals are to involve both parents in the child's life as soon as the parent-child relationship is legally established and to treat the noncustodial parent as more than just a financial resource for the child.

Parents referred to the no-cost mediation program can begin the mediation process immediately, because a mediator is present in Courtroom 2003 each morning, Monday through Thursday. Each parent is given a brief questionnaire to screen for facts that may make the couple inappropriate for mediation, such as a history of domestic violence.

If no obstacles to mediation are present, the couple's first mediation session is held that morning in the conference room of Courtroom 2003. Attorneys representing the parties are requested to leave their telephone, fax, and address information with the mediator, who will fax the mediation results to them.

If a full agreement on all issues is reached that morning, the parties are returned to court before the morning call concludes. If neither party is represented by counsel, the mediator reduces the parties' agreement to writing, and the court incorporates the agreement into the form of a court order.

If, however, one or both parties are represented by counsel, a layman's draft of the agreement is prepared by the mediator and faxed to the attorneys for final review and approval. The court then sets a status date for the presentation of the visitation order to the court. Counsel maintains the right to reject the agreement or modify it as the parties' interests dictate.

Continued on page 7, "Mediation."

Mark Your Calendar for WICSEC 2001

The Annual Western Interstate Child Support Conference (WICSEC) will be held this year in San Antonio, Texas, October 21 – 25, at the OMNI San Antonio Hotel. San Antonio is America's eighth largest city and includes many historical and cultural attractions, including the Paseo del Rio (River Walk) and the Alamo. Reservations can be made by calling 1-800-843-6664 and identifying yourself as a conference participant.

The theme of this year's conference is "Remember the Children—Recordemos Los Ninos," befitting both the message that children are important and the notable Hispanic culture of the conference site.

The theme of this year's conference is "Remember the Children—Recordemos Los Ninos," befitting both the message that children are important and the notable Hispanic culture of the conference site. The agenda will include a legislative update, 35 workshops encompassing varied aspects of the child support program, and eight corresponding round table discussions. National experts will share their knowledge of "cutting edge" issues that affect child support professionals.

Training sessions are geared to satisfy the educational needs of everyone, including front line workers, court administrators, and those in policy development. At least six sessions will offer Continuing Legal Education credit. In addition, the tradition of acknowledging child support professionals and programs, begun at WICSEC 2000, will continue.

A copy of the conference brochure, including a registration form, can be obtained from the WICSEC Web site at http://www.wicsec.org.□

Georgia's Access and Visitation Services Go Statewide

Georgia's Office of Child Support Enforcement has entered into four contracts with service providers to expand Access and Visitation services statewide. The visitation services provide nonlegal services and interventions on behalf of the noncustodial parents referred to the program. In the first six months of the program, the following results were achieved:

- 482 referrals;
- 260 intakes;
- 132 parenting plans;
- 24 mediations;
- 187 attended individual parenting educational sessions;
- 206 attended group parenting education;
- 39 group parenting sessions had been conducted; and
- 109 visitations had been arranged, of which 98 were successful.

For more information, e-mail Russell Eastman at Eastman.R@dhr.state.ga.us.□

Child Support Children First

Charitable Choice and Child Support Enforcement

By: John Jolley

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (Welfare Reform), passed by Congress in August 1996, included a section that has become known as the Charitable Choice provision. This provision laid the groundwork for a partnership between government and faith-based groups.

"Creative local projects can sometimes open a door that traditional services might miss."

.....Deborah Hampton, Director, "Resources for Families."

This past year, OCSE awarded a SIP grant to a Milwaukee-based faith group, the Ecumenical Child Care Network's "Resources for Families" project. This project will forge new collaborations among houses of worship, welfare agencies, early childhood, and other community programs to share information on child support requirements in four cities: Chicago, Illinois; Richmond, Virginia; Seattle, Washington; and Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Deborah Hampton, director of the project, says: "Creative local projects can sometimes open a door that traditional services might miss. We want every child to have the opportunity to develop to his or her full potential."

Throughout our history, community and faith-based groups have been important providers of services to families in need. The Charitable Choice provision enhances and broadens the opportunities for these groups to serve.□

John Jolley is an Advocacy Relations Specialist in OCSE.

Six States Now Have Full Systems Certification

The following states are now PRWORA certified: Washington, Iowa, Maryland, New Mexico, Nevada, and Virginia. Congratulations to staff in all these states for their success in achieving certification.□

Mediation

Continued from page 5.

At times, the initial mediation session does not result in an agreement. In that case, if the mediator and both parents agree to continue the mediation process, a future mediation session, along with a status date, is scheduled.

As a general rule, no more than three mediation sessions are held unless the parties agree to additional sessions and the mediator believes an agreement is likely to result. When an agreement occurs, the mediator faxes the results to the parties' attorneys, who have the responsibility to draft the agreement in the form of an appropriate court order.

As noted, this is a pilot program and for that reason can be considered a work in progress. Yet, those of us involved in its creation and in its day-to-day operations believe it provides a long-needed service to a population of families whose visitation concerns have often gone unaddressed.

Its focus remains on the children of the never married population, children who often grow up not knowing one of their parents. It is hoped that this program, by providing a forum where parental differences can be aired and resolved, will help the parents accept their mutual responsibilities to their children. In turn, those children may gain the opportunity to begin a healthy relationship with a parent that can last a lifetime.□

The Honorable Thomas C. Dudgeon is an associate judge of the 18th Judicial Circuit, DuPage County, Illinois. He currently presides in Courtroom 2003, which hears all parentage and child support cases in the county.

Reprinted with permission of the DuPage County Bar Association *Brief.*

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement
Division of Consumer Services
Mail Stop OCSE/DCS
370 L'Enfant Promenade
Washington D.C. 20447

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Return this sheet to above address if
☐ you do not want to receive this material
☐ a change of address is needed:
indicate change, including zip code.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Administration for Children and Families
Permit No. G-717

SMITH, KAREN
ERIC/CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTER/UNIV OF IL
51 GERTY DR
CHAMPAIGN IL 61820-7453

Child Support Report

Reduction in Systems FFP Rates

Under Section 455(a)(3)(B) of the Social Security Act (Act), states are currently entitled to Federal funding at the "enhanced" 80 percent Federal Financial Participation (FFP) rate for expenditures for the planning, design, development, implementation, and operation of an approved Child Support Enforcement System (CSES) that is capable of performing the tasks and meeting the requirements found in Section 454A of the Act.

Also under Section 455(a)(3)(B) of the Act, funding at this enhanced rate is available only through Fiscal Year 2001.

The 80 percent FFP rate for CSES expenditures is eliminated after September 30, 2001.

For all CSES expenditures made on or after October 1, 2001, Federal funding is only available at the 66 percent FFP rate.

For more information about this change, see Child Support Enforcement Program Action Transmittal OCSE-AT-01-08, dated May 18, 2001.☐

Child Support Report
Vol. XXIII No. 6
June 2001

Child Support Report is a publication of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services.

Acting Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Diann Dawson

Acting Commissioner, OCSE
Frank Fuentes

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax (202) 205-5614
Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

CSR is published for information purposes only. No official endorsement of any practice, publication, or individual by the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Child Support Enforcement is intended or should be inferred.

Internet:
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/index.html
Permission to reprint articles is granted.
Acknowledging **CSR** is appreciated.

If you have enjoyed this issue of ***Child Support Report,*** *please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*

Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement Vol. XXIII, No. 7, July 2001

Louisiana Surveys Its Child Support Customers

In September 1997, Louisiana Governor Mike Foster gave approval for the child support program to determine customer satisfaction levels and assess employee customer service training needs. In response, beginning in calendar year 1999, Louisiana's Support Enforcement Services (SES), the State's child support agency, implemented a Child Support Customer Service Initiative.

The survey took a systems approach to customer service and was designed to include input from stakeholders in all areas of program services. The goal of the initiative, which had three phases, was to improve the effectiveness of SES by implementing strategies to increase and promote customer satisfaction.

Phase one provided customer awareness training for managers and supervisors. Phase two provided the training to all other SES employees. Phase three secured funding for a statewide customer satisfaction survey.

Objectives for Phase 3 included measuring the overall customer satisfaction level with program services, as well as customers' level of knowledge of the program's services, using the survey instrument developed by the OCSE Customer Satisfaction Work Group, in coordination with the Urban Institute. This instrument was developed as part of OCSE's overall customer service/customer satisfaction strategy and was provided in 1999 to all states to use as they wished.

Data for the evaluation were based on information collected by telephone and mail, and from case reviews of agency records for each case in the sample. A random sample of 1000 parents (500 custodial and 500 noncustodial), which met the sample selection criteria (see Box on page 2) and was representative of the entire Louisiana child support caseload, was selected to receive the survey instruments.

Both custodial and noncustodial parents rated their overall level of satisfaction with child support services in the range of "somewhat satisfied" to "very satisfied."

Numerous customer mailing addresses and telephone numbers were not current, partly because of the transient nature of the customer base but also because in many instances the addresses were those of the noncustodial parent. Noncustodial parents' addresses are not updated on a regular basis. Also, some custodial parents who do not receive their payments do not keep SES apprised of current addresses or telephone numbers.

Thirty percent of noncustodial parents were dropped from an initial larger sample because of bad addresses, as were 10 percent of custodial parents.

Continued on page 2, "Louisiana."

PEMD 2001-03

U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Inside

OCSE Hosts Research Conference.....3
Incarcerated Parents in Colorado.....7

Louisiana

Continued from page 1.

These percentages were significantly higher than anticipated.

Response rates were very high for telephone surveys (99 percent), which covered about a third of the sample. For the two-thirds who received the mail survey, response rates were lower: 60 percent for custodial parents and 23 percent for noncustodial.

Custodial and noncustodial parents both preferred that information be given to them in writing.

Both custodial and noncustodial parents rated their overall level of satisfaction with child support services in the range of "somewhat satisfied" to "very satisfied." The exceptions were for waiting time at the DA's office and being kept fully informed. The most common information request was for additional information on child support laws and on increasing support payments. Custodial and noncustodial parents both preferred that information be given to them in writing.

The survey showed that, with the exceptions of enforcement by income withholding and award guidelines, custodial parents were knowledgeable about the program's services. Noncustodial parents tended to be less knowledgeable, especially about paternity establishment.

Recommendations included more training for staff on effective case management techniques, developing an office procedural manual for customers, and conducting an employee job satisfaction survey.

On request, data from this survey is available to other states to use as a model or resource for planning customer satisfaction surveys or implementing customer service changes.

If you would like more information about Louisiana's customer service survey, contact the Principal Investigator, Kathy Morris, at (225) 342-4780.□

Criteria for Inclusion of Cases in the Louisiana Survey Sample

- Case contained a valid child support application, referral, or interstate petition;
- Case consisted of only one custodial parent, one noncustodial parent, and one or more children;
- Case had an ongoing order for child or medical support, or was in the process of having paternity and child or medical support established as of December 31, 1999;
- Name and location of the noncustodial parent was known; and
- Case was not suspended, closed, or an arrears-only case as of December 31, 1999.

Respondents with multiple cases were asked only about one case. In foster care cases, only the noncustodial parent was surveyed. Other states' child support agencies or customers were not interviewed. This would require a different survey approach that could be considered at a later date.□

OCSE Hosts Research Conference

OCSE hosted a research conference June 7 and 8, 2001 in Arlington Virginia at the Crystal Gateway Marriott. The conference brought together 150 leading child support administrators, practitioners, and researchers to create a forum for information exchange, encourage more state-level child support research, and generate new research ideas (see Box).

The overall conference goal was to increase and improve child support research that will be used to shape the future of child support enforcement at the federal, state, and local levels.

Mr. Garfinkel . . . discussed the importance of research as a vehicle to explain the success of child support, especially in helping to keep families off welfare.

OCSE Acting Commissioner Frank Fuentes and Gaile Maller, Director of the agency's Division of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, welcomed the participants. Commissioner Fuentes said, "There is no way that we can do effective work in this area without taking advantage of the best research available on children and families and conducting some of our own. . . . Our policies and operations should be based on the best available research findings."

Ms. Maller added that OCSE is interested in "expanding the width and depth of our research. We want to enhance the capacity of states to do research that will improve the delivery of services and collect more money on behalf of the children of America."

Irv Garfinkel and Marilyn Ray Smith spoke at the opening plenary session on "Child Support Research and National Policy Formation." Ms. Smith said that an important task was to learn how to translate the findings of research into usable information for the field. She also said that rather than asking how much noncustodial parents should be paying, we should be trying to determine the reasons why they are not paying.

Mr. Garfinkel indicated that support takes a variety of forms and touched on the importance of different kinds. He then discussed the importance of research as a vehicle to explain the success of child support, especially in helping to keep families off welfare.

Plenary sessions on child support research and national policy formation, research and state operations, and building linkages between child support agencies and the research community were followed by workshops on a variety of research topics, among which were: operations research, paternity and child support orders, low-income and incarcerated noncustodial parents, evaluation methodologies, and research tools and databases.

If you would like more information about the conference, contact Jim Rich at (202) 401-3447.□

Suggested Research Topics: Child Support's Impact on Parents and Families

- Visitation—Its impact on child well being.
- Responsible Parenting Programs—Their effectiveness in terms of compliance with support orders and connecting noncustodial parents with their children.
- Case Characteristics—The demographic characteristics of child support cases.
- Self-Sufficiency—The relationship between TANF exit and receipt of child support.
- Family Formation—What factors lead to an increased incidence of marriage, especially for parents in nonmarital birth cases?
- Outreach to Diverse Populations—What are promising practices for providing services to culturally and/or linguistically diverse populations?
- Community Outreach—How can child support agencies work with community based organizations and the faith-based community to achieve common objectives?□

President Addresses Fatherhood Issues

Citing the public consequences of fatherlessness, President George W. Bush said that public officials have a role to play in what he called "one of our greatest social problems. . . . . The fatherhood movement is diverse," the President said, "but it is united by one belief: fathers have a unique and irreplaceable role in the lives of children."

Fatherhood is a major item in the President's 2002 budget, which provides $64 million for programs designed to strengthen fatherhood and $315 million over five years. The 2002 budget also includes $67 million for helping the children and families of incarcerated fathers.

"The fatherhood movement is diverse, but it is united by one belief: fathers have a unique and irreplaceable role in the lives of children."

.....President George W. Bush

In his remarks, the President also acknowledged single mothers. "They deserve our respect," he said, "and they deserve our support" in grappling with circumstances "far harder than most of us can possibly imagine. . . . [but] we must never forget [that] children need their dads, and when they're absent, something is lost."

The President made his remarks to participants at the 4th National Summit on Fatherhood, June 7, in Washington, DC.□

Hawaii Achieves Systems Certification

Hawaii's PRWORA certification review report was signed on June 11, 2001, making the State the 7th to have achieved PRWORA systems certification.□

Georgia Airs "The Fathers Side" Video

Georgia's Office of Child Support Enforcement contracted with Georgia Public Broadcasting to produce a 30-minute video about the Georgia Fatherhood Program. "The Father's Side" is the title of the new video. The project was shown on Georgia Public Television on Father's Day, June 17, 2001.

In documentary style, the video profiles three Fatherhood participants who face different barriers to employment, such as lack of transportation, criminal backgrounds, and substance abuse problems. A film crew spent time with each participant at home, on the job, at church, in class, and with their children.

"The goal of this project is to highlight the participants and the changes their involvement with the Fatherhood Program has brought to their lives and the lives of their children," says Robert Riddle, Director of Georgia's Office of Child Support Enforcement. "The Fatherhood Program," he continues, "makes it possible for low-income men who owe child support to go to technical school, learn a marketable skill, and get a job."

To date, more than 8,000 men have received one or more of the program's services. More than 2,100 men are currently enrolled in the program.

A copy of the program video, "The Father's Side," will be sent to every state child support director. If you would like more information about the Georgia Fatherhood Program, contact Robert Johnson at rfjohnso@dhr.state.ga.us or at (404) 657-9222.□

Judicial Family Relations Counselors Work With Connecticut Parents to Resolve Visitation Issues

By: Debra Kulak, Roger Frigon, and Keary Pitt

Every day at Family Support Magistrate Court locations in Connecticut, court opens with an advisement of rights by the presiding Magistrate. Those in attendance are informed of their rights and responsibilities and the powers that the Court has to establish and enforce child support orders.

In Hartford's Family Support Magistrate Court, an additional message is provided. The Magistrate announces that federal funds associated with the State's Access and Visitation Grant have made it possible for the Court to acquire a Judicial Family Relations Counselor—a trained, experienced mediator—to address visitation issues. This person is present in the courtroom during the advisement of rights each Monday morning, Wednesday afternoon, and Friday morning. Each of these times corresponds either with the days on which support orders are issued for the first time or with the Contempt Calendar.

The Magistrate reminds the parents in Court that caring for their children is their foremost responsibility and that this is a responsibility best shared by both parents. The Court also cites its statutory power to accept and approve parenting agreements that are presented by the parents as being in the best interests of their children. Such agreements, the Magistrate explains, are often the product of the parents' work with the Family Relations Counselor and, once approved, are enforceable orders of the Court.

The Family Relations Counselor, who is neither an attorney nor an advocate for either parent, conducts a brief assessment at the first meeting to determine the best approach to resolving the parents' concerns. Families who are involved with the State's Child Protection Agency are not accepted for this service. Where there is a history of domestic violence, special attention is given to safety issues. Parents are not asked to meet together if there is a safety concern or an existing Restraining Order or Protective Order.

While the focus of mediation is on the development of a structured parenting schedule that can be codified by the Court, the process is one that emphasizes cooperation, compromise, and constructive problem solving. Parents are encouraged to establish short-term goals that can help them develop the mutual trust and respect that will form the foundation for their long-term parenting relationship. The need for flexibility is stressed so that the parents can adjust to their child's needs and other changing circumstances. The parents also are encouraged to consider mediation as an aid in resolving other conflicts that may arise in the future.

The process is one that emphasizes cooperation, compromise, and constructive problem solving.

When parents reach an agreement about a parenting plan that they both believe is in their child's best interests, their plan is committed to writing, signed by both of them, and placed on the Court's docket at a mutually agreeable date. The parents then appear before the Family Support Court Magistrate to present their agreement and have it made into an enforceable Court Order.

This program has benefited the families and the Court alike. The issues of visitation and parental involvement are handled in an expedient, cost-effective manner, while a foundation of cooperation and communication between the parents is established that can help them become better parents in the future.

If you have questions or would like to learn more about this project, contact Debra Kulak at (860) 566-3140.□

Debra Kulak is Family Services Supervisor, Court Support Services Division, Family Services Unit, Hartford, Connecticut. Roger Frigon and Keary Pitt are Family Relations Counselors in the Family Services Unit.

2001 Conference Calendar

July

23-24 *2nd Annual Hispanic Leadership Forum,* HHH Building, Room 800, Washington, DC, Frank Fajardo (303) 844-3100 X 312 or Toni Baker (202) 401-4731.

27 *Kansas Child Support Enforcement Association 2001 Conference,* Holiday Inn Holidome and Convention Center, Topeka, KS, Sara Wilson (316) 429-3014.

August

12-16 *NCSEA 50th Annual Conference and Exposition,* Hilton New York, New York City, NY, Carol Henry (202) 624-8180.

27-29 *Nebraska Association of Child Support Enforcement Annual Training Conference,* Ramada Inn, Kearney, NE, Sondra Cluck (308) 535-8254.

September

4-7 *Southwest Regional Support Enforcement Association 2001 Annual Training Conference,* Renaissance Hotel & Myriad Convention Center, Oklahoma City, OK, Laurel Eaton (405) 522-2660.

9-13 *Domestic Relations Association of Pennsylvania 34th Annual Conference,* Harrisburg Hilton-Towers, Harrisburg, PA, Rosemary McFee (610) 782-3185.

10-12, *OCSE 11th National Child Support Enforcement Training Conference,* Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, VA, Bertha Hammett (202) 5292 or Isabelle Howes (202) 314-3471.

24-25 *NE HUB Conference on Welfare to Work for Noncustodial Parents,* TBA, Philadelphia, PA, Joanne Krudys (212) 264-2890 X 127 or Juanita DeVine (215) 861-4054.

October

2-4 *Washington State Family Support Council's 22nd Annual Conference: "Children First,"* Wenatchee, WA, Judy Young (360)664-5063.

10-12 *Maryland Joint Child Support Conference,* Princess Royale Hotel, Ocean City, MD, Kelvin Harris (410) 764-2843.

21-25 *Western Interstate Child Support Enforcement Council Annual Training Conference,* Omni San Antonio Hotel, San Antonio, TX, Cheryl Kabler (512) 460-6348.□

Children Living With Two Parents

The majority of the 71 million children who live in the United States live with two parents, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, although the percentage has been decreasing since 1980. In 1980, 77 percent of all children under age 18 lived with two parents, falling to 73 percent in 1990 and 68 percent by 1998.

Over the 18-year period, the share of children living with only their mother rose from 18 percent to 23 percent and the share living with only their father grew from less than 2 percent to about 4 percent. In 1998, about 3 percent of children lived with other relatives and about 1 percent lived with people who were not relatives.□

Source: United States Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

Child Support Children First

What Research Shows About the Incarcerated Parent in Colorado

By: Jessica Pearson

With the support of the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, Colorado has conducted a number of pilot projects and studies on incarcerated noncustodial parents. Here's what the research shows.

- Incarcerated noncustodial parents often do not know that their child support obligations continue at order levels set prior to their incarceration, even when their earnings stop. On average, incarcerated noncustodial parents in Colorado have child support orders of $178 per month. They earn 25 cents to $2.50 per day;

Incarcerated noncustodial parents often do not know they can request a modification of their child support obligations while they are in prison.

- Incarcerated noncustodial parents accumulate substantial arrears while they are in prison. On average, noncustodial parents in Colorado prisons have arrears balances that average $11,738. As a group, they owe $53 million;
- Incarcerated noncustodial parents often do not know they can request a modification of their child support obligations while they are in prison. Many assume that nothing can happen to them while they are in prison and are confused about how to request a change;
- Efforts to educate incarcerated noncustodial parents about child support policies and modification requests are complicated by high rates of inmate mobility across facilities and by difficulties gaining access to facilities and to the appropriate prisoners within a facility. There also are a limited number of Department of Corrections and CSE staff to make presentations about child support and a limited number of staff to process modification requests, as well as the lack of a prior working relationship between corrections and child support;
- Colorado, as is true of most states, has no consistent policy for incarcerated and paroled noncustodial parents, with some jurisdictions granting modifications due to incarceration, while others treat incarceration as voluntary unemployment and refuse to change pre-incarceration orders; and

Colorado inmates give high marks to a two-hour training program on child support and child access conducted in prisons by the State's child support program.

- Colorado inmates give high marks to a two-hour training program on child support and child access conducted in prisons by the State's child support program, with 90 percent rating it as helpful, recommending it to others, and saying that all their child support questions were answered. Inmates also did well on a brief quiz on child support administered at the end of the program, correctly noting that child support arrears accumulate during incarceration and that they must file a written request to modify in order for changes to be made in their orders.

For more information on child support and incarceration in Colorado, contact Dan Welch at (720) 947-5087.□

Jessica Pearson, Ph.D., is the Director of the Center for Policy Research in Denver, Colorado.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement
Division of Consumer Services
Mail Stop OCSE/DCS
370 L'Enfant Promenade
Washington D.C. 20447

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Return this sheet to above address if
☐ you do not want to receive this material
☐ a change of address is needed:
indicate change, including zip code.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Administration for
Children and Families
Permit No. G-717

SMITH, KAREN
ERIC/CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTER/UNIV OF IL
51 GERTY DR
CHAMPAIGN IL 61820-7453

Child Support Report

Minnesota's Recognition of Parentage Program

Last year in Minnesota, about 17,000 children were born to unmarried parents. Paternity was established for about 15,000 children, and 78 percent of these were voluntary establishments through the Recognition of Parentage (ROP) program, which places the father's name on the birth certificate.

At the Cambridge Medical Center in Isanti County, staff helped to establish paternity for 101 children. Shonna Reineccius, health unit coordinator, said that about 95 percent of unmarried couples complete the ROP process, either at the time of their child's birth or soon after. Reineccius attributed Cambridge's success to customer service.

"We meet with parents one-on-one and present them with a ROP form already typed up," she said. "We introduce the materials early, even while Mom is in labor, so that nothing is left to the last minute. It's so important for Dads to be involved with their kids. The ROP program helps get them started."☐

This article originally appeared in the Minnesota Child Support Program's *"Child Support Quarterly."* Used with permission.

Child Support Report
Vol. XXIII No. 7
July 2001

Child Support Report is a publication of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services.

Acting Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
Diann Dawson

Acting Commissioner, OCSE
Frank Fuentes

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax (202) 205-5614
Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

CSR is published for information purposes only. No official endorsement of any practice, publication, or individual by the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Child Support Enforcement is intended or should be inferred.

Internet:
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/index.html
Permission to reprint articles is granted.
Acknowledging CSR is appreciated.

If you have enjoyed this issue of ***Child Support Report,*** *please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*

Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement Vol. XXIII, No. 8, August 2001

Wade F. Horn Confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Children and Families and Director of the Office of Child Support Enforcement

On July 25, the Senate confirmed Wade F. Horn to be the Assistant Secretary for Children and Families of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), a position that also carries the title, Director of the Office of Child Support Enforcement.

Dr. Horn was most recently the President of the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI), an organization called by President George W. Bush "a powerful voice for responsible fatherhood."

From 1989 to 1993, Dr. Horn served DHHS as Commissioner of the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families and Chief of the Children's Bureau. A member of the U.S. Advisory Committee on Head Start Research and Evaluation within DHHS, he received the Award for Distinguished Leadership in Head Start Research from DHHS in 1993.

The author of numerous journal articles and several books, Dr. Horn is a graduate of American University and received his Master's degree and Ph.D. from Southern Illinois University.

Dr. Horn's interest in and support of Fatherhood issues is well known throughout the child support community. He has addressed numerous major child support meetings and conferences.

. . . a powerful voice for responsible fatherhood.

As NFI President, he pursued a three-part strategy of educating the public about the importance of fathers to the well-being of children and communities; bringing together national and local community leaders in support of a culture that values good fathers; and producing skill building and community resource materials on how men can become better fathers and how local communities can promote, encourage, and support fathers.□

PS 030112

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Inside

The Boston Partners.....2
Chickasaw Nation Receives Direct Federal Funding.....7

The Boston Partners: A Coalition to Strengthen Fathers and Families

By: Richard Claytor

Because of the importance of responsible fathers in the lives of their children, the Boston Partners to Strengthen Fathers and Families, formed in 1997, is moving forward to increase the capacity of young fathers and mothers to become financial, emotional, and nurturing resources for their children. The initiative, consistent with PRWORA's mandate, also seeks to reduce the levels of poverty and dependency on public assistance of these parents, and to establish conditions that may lead to the formation (and re-formation) of two parent families.

The Core Partner Organizations

- Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Child Support Enforcement Division;
- Family Service of Greater Boston;
- STRIVE;
- Boston TenPoint Coalition;
- Children's Trust Fund;
- Boston Healthy Start-Father Friendly Initiative; and
- Boston Private Industry Council.

The Partners have developed strategies that are workable for Boston families and providers.

Four Core Service Components

- Case management for fathers. Case management teams are made up of career and clinical staff who will work with participants throughout their job readiness, employment, and post placement experience;
- A fatherhood development and peer support curriculum;
- Visitation support services; and
- Couple education during pregnancy.

Working with existing fathers programs, core partners, and affiliate organizations, the Partners seek to increase the breadth and stability of services for fathers and their fragile families and to institutionalize these services at a higher level than currently exists.

The Boston Partners . . . is moving forward to increase the capacity of young fathers and mothers to become financial, emotional, and nurturing resources for their children. . . . and to establish conditions that may lead to the formation (and re-formation) of two parent families.

Three examples of their services are the Welfare-to-Work Project, an Offender Responsible Fatherhood Initiative, and Access and Visitation Services.

Welfare-to-Work

Even though a father's financial support is critically necessary, children of all socioeconomic backgrounds also need emotional support. As a result, child support policy makers are looking for ways to reach fathers and connect them to their children in positive ways that go beyond a financial contribution. Employment is a crucial element in this strategy, as it can lead to increased stability in other areas of family life.

The Boston Partners, in collaboration with the Boston Private Industry Council, the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services, the Marriott Corporation, and Partners HealthCare propose:

- To provide employment opportunities and thereby increase the earning capacity of noncustodial parents participating in the project; and
- To facilitate noncustodial parents' responsible involvement in the lives of their children by developing their parental nurturing and care taking capacities, and educating them in the positive effects fathers and two-parent families have on children.

Offender Responsible Fatherhood Initiative

This initiative, featuring close collaboration between child support enforcement and county sheriffs, promotes offenders' compliance with realistic and workable child support agreements, while, at the same time, sending a message that incarceration does not excuse child support obligations.

Continued on page 3, "Boston Partners."

Boston Partners

Continued from page 2.

The 17-month pilot project works with noncustodial fathers who have child support responsibilities and are under criminal justice supervision. The focus is on inmates of the Department of Corrections and the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, and parolees in Suffolk County. The purpose is to improve offenders' financial and emotional support of their children by:

- Increasing the knowledge of offenders and staff about child support;
- Streamlining procedures to handle inmates' child support orders; and
- Providing connections to services in the community to help released offenders become responsible parents.

Access and Visitation Services

There are two primary community-based initiatives under the auspices of Massachusetts' Access and Visitation Program: a parent education orientation program and visitation support services. These programs are currently being piloted in Suffolk County, but they are designed for replication in other parts of the Commonwealth as additional resources become available.

Parent Education

The parent education orientation program is delivered in the probate and family court and by community and faith-based organizations. Since not all never-married parents appear in court, delivering the orientation program through community and faith-based organizations provides an opportunity to reach and influence a greater number of parents. In addition, these organizations provide a supportive environment for parents to ask questions and gain a better understanding of access and visitation issues that may affect them and their children.

Visitation Support

The project has contracted with social service providers to provide a number of visitation support services for these families.

The goal of visitation support services is to create a community-based system for needed services and to develop the capacity of these families to reach an early resolution of access and visitation issues with the help of community members, rather than by intensive intervention of service professionals.

If you would like to know more about the Boston Partners' efforts to strengthen fathers and families, contact Richard Claytor at (617) 626-4171.□

Richard Claytor is the Director of Massachusetts' Responsible Fatherhood Project.

Acting Commissioner Testifies in Congress

On June 28, 2001, Acting Commissioner Frank Fuentes testified before the Subcommittee on Human Resources, Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Representatives.

"We are excited," he said, "about the dramatic results we have achieved under PRWORA and are convinced that the future of child support enforcement will continue on a successful path. Critical to these efforts, though, is a new and determined focus on fathers. . . .

"OCSE has worked to strengthen the role of fathers in families. For example, we have funded eight child support enforcement responsible fatherhood demonstration projects that will help bolster fathers' financial and emotional involvement with their children. Each project is different, although they all provide a range of services to aid in collecting child support, such as job training, access and visitation, and social services. . . .

"In addition, PRWORA created a $10 million access and visitation program for states, a program that provided services to more than 22,000 individuals in 1997 and an estimated 50,000 in 1998. . . .

"We can improve on existing efforts by focusing more attention on strengthening our commitment to fatherhood, and we look forward to working with you." □

Dads and Jobs
Welfare-to-Work and Child Support

By: Dail Moore

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) provided states with increased flexibility to operate programs designed to help fathers train for jobs and obtain employment. The Act also encouraged states to promote marriage and the formation and maintenance of two parent families.

PRWORA . . . encouraged states to promote marriage and the formation and maintenance of two parent families.

Welfare-to-Work, created in 1997 to augment PRWORA, serves a related purpose by providing employment training for low income parents. Regular employment is a strong predictor of family formation. Welfare-to-Work rules were recently relaxed to enroll even more noncustodial fathers.

Fathers who want to pay their child support need to have a job, for, except in very few cases, employment is fundamental to paying child support. The vast majority of money children receive from their noncustodial parents derives from regular employment.

Sustained employment for the noncustodial parent can mean more than just income to children and families. Noncustodial parents who are regularly employed and pay their child support also are more likely to participate in the lives of their children. And through that participation, they will be better positioned to establish (or re-establish) a good relationship with their children.

Welfare-to-Work is targeted to low-income families and is designed to serve both parents through an array of job preparation and job retention services. Collaboration between child support agencies and the Welfare-to-Work program is beneficial because it can help recipients of services better understand the importance of having a steady job and making regular child support payments.

Each father who enrolls in Welfare-to-Work also agrees to cooperate with child support enforcement. Thus, child support agencies can benefit in a variety of ways from the successes of Welfare-to-Work fathers. Examples of benefits can include:

- More paternities established;
- More orders established;
- More paying cases; and
- Increased amounts paid on cases.

To develop and encourage the child support/Welfare-to-Work connection, OCSE has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Welfare-to-Work and OneStop Offices of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.

In that Memorandum, OCSE and DOL agree to cooperate on several joint ventures to encourage collaboration and increase enrollment of noncustodial parents in Welfare-to-Work. Among them:

- Development of a Welfare-to-Work Bench Card for judges and hearing officers to use as a tool to refer noncustodial parents to the program;
- Development of a collaboration training curriculum for joint training of line workers in child support, TANF, and Welfare-to-Work/OneStop offices. The training will increase knowledge of the programs and emphasize the benefits to families of coordinated service delivery;
- Identification and promotion of promising practices in Welfare-to-Work/child support collaboration; and
- Joint development and dissemination of technical assistance materials.

Through these kinds of activities, states are moving forward in pursuit of their goals to promote job preparation, work, and marriage, and to encourage the formation and maintenance of two parent families.

If you would like more information, contact Dail Moore at(202) 401-3438 or e-mail dmoore@acf.dhhs.gov.□

Dail Moore is Welfare-to-Work Officer, Division of Special Staffs, in the Office of Child Support Enforcement.

Texas Young Lawyers Association Joins Office of Attorney General in Child Support Pro Bono Project

By: Frank Pierce and Veronica Torrez

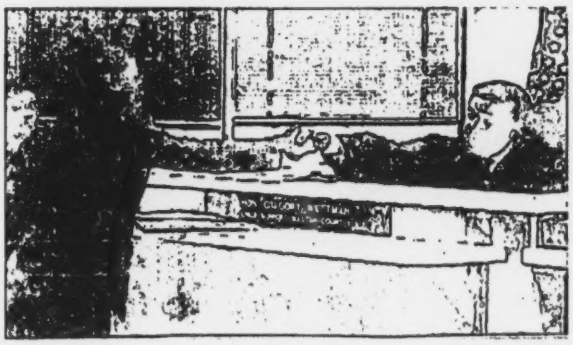
The Texas Young Lawyers Association's Child Support Enforcement Project (CSEP) is a joint project with the Texas Office of the Attorney General (OAG). The purpose is to assist the OAG's efforts to collect child support owed to custodial parents in Texas.

The project addresses an important community need while providing young attorneys with an opportunity for hands-on courtroom experience and continuing legal education.

Through this project, volunteer attorneys assist the courts and OAG by spending at least one day per quarter prosecuting child support cases in order to establish, collect, and enforce child support payments. The project addresses an important community need while providing young attorneys with an opportunity for hands-on courtroom experience and continuing legal education.

During the 2000-2001 bar year, more than one hundred young lawyers were provided classroom training to work with Assistant Attorneys General in Houston, Dallas, Austin, San Antonio, and Fort Worth. The training they received was a condensed version of the family law education and training that an employed Assistant Attorney General would undergo before working in the Child Support Division of the OAG.

Each volunteer attorney received 6.25 hours of continuing legal education credit for attending the classroom training and committed to spending one half day of observation of a normal docket call in child support court, and to returning to assist the OAG at least once per quarter during the following year.



In July, 2000, Texas State Attorney John Cornyn made a public commitment to the project and by April, 2001, 106 volunteer attorneys had been trained. Forty-four volunteer attorneys, working in six counties (Bexar, Travis, Williamson, Tarrant, Dallas, and Harris) assisted with 1,471 cases during the past year. These numbers are certain to increase as more of the attorneys who have received the training begin to volunteer their time.

The project received the Texas Young Lawyers Association's President's Award of Merit at the June, 2001 Texas State Bar Convention. The award recognizes significant contributions to the furtherance of the goals and objectives of the Association.□

Frank Pierce is Special Counsel for the Attorney General's Child Support Division. Veronica Torrez is Managing Attorney for the Attorney General's Child Support Division.

[The Texas Young Lawyers Association Child Support Enforcement Project was developed and implemented with the guidance and direction of Mr. Pierce and Ms. Torrez.]

Midwest Hub Tribal Conference

By: Sally Kolanowski and Sherri Larkins

The Midwest HUB Tribal Conference, hosted June 5 – 7 in Prior Lake, Minnesota by the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, featured the theme "Linking Together for a Better Future." All ACF funded programs were represented and ACF initiatives on fatherhood and domestic violence were highlighted.

Dr. Brown's speech, "Nation Building," emphasized the necessity for Tribes to build and sustain strong self-directed communities, based on the premise that only when those Nations achieve this landmark, will they be able to move families from welfare to work.

"The conference theme captured the true spirit of this three-day adventure," said Midwest Hub Director Joyce A. Thomas. "In partnership with our 44 Federally recognized Hub Tribes, Federal staff from the Central Office, staff from the Midwest Hub, and representatives from the West-Central and Pacific Hubs, we have begun a journey to improve the lives of tribal families and children. I am tremendously proud of everyone who participated with us and worked so hard to make this historic meeting a success."

Dr. Eddie Brown, Associate Dean for Community Affairs and Director of the Buder Center for American Indian Studies at Washington University in St. Louis, provided the keynote address. Dr. Brown's speech, "Nation Building," emphasized the necessity for Tribes to build and sustain strong self-directed communities, based on the premise that only when those Nations achieve this landmark will they be able to move families from welfare to work. He encouraged federal, state, and local governments to eliminate fragmentation of services, promote coordination between various human services programs, and offer streamlined funding mechanisms.

The four Tribal Child Support Enforcement Program (TCSEP) sessions sought to provide comprehensive tribal child support information and regulations to Midwest HUB tribes currently operating the TCSEP Program (the Menominee Nation and the Lac du Flambeau Nation of Wisconsin) and to those Midwest Hub tribes contemplating operation in the future.

A highlight of the conference from a child support perspective occurred at the Tribal Roundtable sponsored by the Native American members of the child support planning workgroup. The tribal representatives attending the Roundtable unanimously agreed on the need for a national tribal child support enforcement association. For more information on the association, contact Jerry Sweet, the Child Support Director for the Chickasaw Nation at (580) 436-3410 or Tami Lorbecke, Tribal Child Support Manager, Lac du Flambeau Tribe at (715) 588-9636. For more information about the conference, contact Sally Kolanowski at (312) 353-7073 or Sherri Larkins at (816) 426-3981 X 167.□

Sally Kolanowski is a Program Specialist in ACF's Region V, Chicago Office; Sherri Larkins is a Program Specialist in Region VII, Kansas City.

Child Support Children First

Chickasaw Nation First Indian Tribe to Receive Direct Federal Funding

A partnership agreement between the child support offices of the Chickasaw Nation, the State of Oklahoma, and the Federal Government was signed recently, making each full and equal partners in providing child support services to all Indian children in Oklahoma. The Chickasaw Nation's tribal child support program is the first to receive direct funding from the Federal Government. The grant award is for more than $1.2 million annually.

Shortly after passage of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act authorized tribes to enter into agreements with state child support agencies, the Chickasaw Nation child support enforcement office entered into a cooperative agreement with the State of Oklahoma and OCSE. Under the terms of that agreement, the Tribe provides services to Indian children residing within the boundaries of the Chickasaw Nation.

"The Chickasaw Nation is at the forefront of new beginnings in tribal relations for the nation's child support enforcement program."

.....Diann Dawson

"I want to commend Governor Anoatubby and the Chickasaw Nation for their leadership on this issue and for being recognized with this historic grant," said U.S. Representative Wes Watkins, of Oklahoma's Third Congressional District.

This grant, Governor Anoatubby said, "provides additional funding . . . so that even more Indian children will receive the financial and emotional support they deserve."

As the first Tribe to receive direct federal funding for its child support program, "The Chickasaw Nation is at the forefront of new beginnings in tribal relations for the nation's child support enforcement program," said Diann Dawson, principal deputy assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families.

"These funds will help us continue to pursue our mission of providing a voice for Indian children."

.....Jerry Sweet

The Chickasaw Nation's child support enforcement program is directed by Jerry Sweet. "This grant," Mr. Sweet said, "will help strengthen the partnership we have developed with the State, Federal, and other Tribal governments. More importantly, these funds will help us continue to pursue our mission of providing a voice for Indian children, as well as holding parents accountable for the support of their children."□

**U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services**

Administration for Children
and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement
Division of Consumer Services
Mail Stop OCSE/DCS
370 L'Enfant Promenade
Washington D.C. 20447

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Return this sheet to above address if
☐ you do not want to receive this material
☐ a change of address is needed:
indicate change, including zip code.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Administration for
Children and Families
Permit No. G-717

SMITH, KAREN
ERIC/CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTER/UNIV OF IL
51 GERTY DR
CHAMPAIGN IL 61820-7453

Child Support Report

Communities of Practice

A practice used by businesses to get good results is now used by government to improve service to customers.

In the corporate world, a "Community of Practice," or COP, might help computer technicians to swap advice on repair problems not described in the company's repair manual. A web site would contain the information so it would be available at any hour to any technician anywhere in the country.

In the child support enforcement community, OCSE set up a COP for SDU coordinators so they can ask each other for advice on operational issues using a master e-mail list called a ListServ.

The information exchanged is then stored in a WorkPlace (a cyber-library) for later reference by members of the SDU community. OCSE has made similar arrangements for state training representatives, access and visitation program coordinators, and systems project directors.

For more information about COPs, contact OCSE's Myles Schlank at (202) 401-9329.☐

Child Support Report
Vol. XXIII No. 8
August 2001

Child Support Report is a publication of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services.

Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Wade F. Horn

Acting Commissioner, OCSE
Frank Fuentes

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax (202) 205-5614
Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

CSR is published for information purposes only. No official endorsement of any practice, publication, or individual by the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Child Support Enforcement is intended or should be inferred.

Internet:
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/index.html
Permission to reprint articles is granted.
Acknowledging **CSR** is appreciated.

If you have enjoyed this issue of ***Child Support Report,*** *please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*

Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement Vol. XXIII, No. 9, September 2001

New Mexico's eChild Support Enforcement Website

New Mexico's Human Services Department has partnered with a contractor to develop an Internet-based solution to the challenge of providing quality case management services to a growing child support population in the face of limited office hours and staff ceilings.

The State's eChild Website enables parents and employers to perform tasks and exchange information that until recently could only be handled on the phone or in person with agency staff.

The State's eChild Website enables parents and employers to perform tasks and exchange information that until recently could only be handled on the phone or in person with agency staff.

Using the Website, **http://childsupport.hsd.state.nm.us,** New Mexico's child support customers can:

- Apply for child support services;
- Inquire about child support payment status;
- View payment history;
- View child support owed on the case;
- Provide address updates;
- Provide locate "leads" on the whereabouts of the noncustodial parent;
- Have payments automatically deposited into their bank accounts;
- Arrange to pay for child support electronically;
- Update employment information; and
- Update asset information.

The new system:

Improves Customer Service

eChild Support puts information in the hands of parents when they need it, including nights, weekends, and holidays; and customers can access the Internet for information from a number of different places, such as home, work, or libraries.

Improves Case Management

As parents use eChild Support for routine information exchange, agency staff can devote more time to complex cases.

Improves the Existing Information System

eChild Support provides a window on an agency's existing Information System, making it easier to understand and tailor to specific audiences' data requirements.

For more information, contact Richard Quillin, Chief Information Officer, New Mexico Human Services Department, at (505) 827-7752.□

PS 830112

U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Inside

OCSE Launches Leadership Training.....3
Wisconsin's W-2 Program Child Support Benefits.....5

Acting Commissioner Addresses NCSEA Conference

Speaking to an audience of more than 1,500 child support professionals, OCSE Acting Commissioner Frank Fuentes praised achievements in collections, paternities established, and persons served, but said there is still too much unpaid child support.

"The regular payment of child support reduces families' poverty and increases children's hopes for a better life."

.....OCSE Acting Commissioner Frank Fuentes

"Child support workers," he said, "must be clear about how critically important child support is in this time when more and more people are moving from welfare to work. Increasing collections must continue to be a priority because the regular payment of child support reduces families' poverty and increases children's hopes for a better life."

Mr. Fuentes pledged continuing OCSE efforts in support of fathers through demonstration projects, Special Improvement Project (SIP) grants, Access and Visitation program grants, and collaborations with Head Start and others.

"Our commitment," he said, "in this new century is for the child support program to become a key component in helping fathers reconnect with their families."

He reminded his listeners that research has shown that children do better when they are part of a family structure, and that families are better off when there are two parents. In closing, Mr. Fuentes challenged conference participants to join with OCSE in a commitment to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. □

A Snapshot of Child Support in the United Kingdom

On August 21, OCSE staff had the privilege of hearing Michael Isaac, Deputy Chief Executive for child support in the United Kingdom (UK), discuss child support in England, Scotland, and Wales. Mr. Isaac is the director of operations, with responsibility for frontline service delivery across the UK. The motto of the UK child support program is: "Work for those who can; support for those who cannot." The UK government has made a commitment to eliminate child poverty within 20 years.

The UK's program is administered through a single national agency with 11,500 staff serving 1.1 million clients, collecting $1.4 billion per year, and operating on the basic principle of parental responsibility.

The program's emphasis is on "natural compliance," as opposed to enforcing payment by threat of punitive measures. In 20 percent of the cases, payment is made directly by the nonresidential parent to the residential parent. Current UK initiatives include fatherhood, family formation, and marriage.

The agency is currently undergoing a three-year "modernization agenda," which will simplify program complexity, speed up case processing, and enable more effective action against those who default on payment of support. The modernization, which will affect all staff, will cost about $700 million and require new legislation, procedures, and computer systems.

If you would like to learn more about child support in the United Kingdom, contact OCSE's Anne Benson, who recently spent a year in England working with the UK child support program. Anne can be reached at (202) 401-1467.□

OCSE Launches Leadership Training Course

By: Jack Shaw

OCSE's new leadership training course, "Innovative Leadership Practices in Child Support Enforcement," was piloted in July in Washington D.C. to a group of child support directors and other senior CSE staff. The course draws on academic studies of leadership "best practices" of prominent corporate and government leaders and uses behavior models to demonstrate principles of effective leadership.

The principles are discussed in an interactive forum and played out experientially in case studies applied in a child support enforcement context.

The course draws on academic studies of leadership "best practices" of prominent corporate and government leaders and uses behavior models to demonstrate principles of effective leadership.

"The seminar's primary goal," says Yvette Hilderson Riddick, chief of OCSE's National Training Center within the Division of State, Tribal and Local Assistance, "is to improve the performance of CSE organizations by enhancing CSE managers' leadership skills and abilities."

Participants will:

- Better understand contemporary leadership principles and practices and how they can be applied in the child support environment;
- Have increased awareness of their leadership strengths and areas for improvement;
- Develop a personal improvement plan;
- Understand the dynamics of organizational and personal change; and
- Be able to prepare CSE staff and the work environment for change.

Still under discussion as an optional part of the course curriculum is a 360-degree feedback tool. In this approach, participants are asked to provide the names of peers, staff, and others who can give feedback regarding their management styles. This feedback is then analyzed for trends in terms of the participants' management strengths and weaknesses.

The target audience is experienced child support directors and their executive staff.

Riddick emphasizes that this course is not for everyone. The target audience is experienced child support directors and their executive staff. The child support directors, who are encouraged to nominate themselves and one other person, handpick participants.

"Innovative Leadership Practices in Child Support Enforcement" will be field tested again in early October, with a follow-up delivery in January of 2002. Following final adjustments in curriculum and formatting, the course is to be made available through OCSE's National Electronic Child Support Resource System and by classroom delivery.

For more information about this course, as well as other courses available through OCSE's National Training Center, contact Jack Shaw at (202) 401-5144.□

Jack Shaw is a Training Specialist in OCSE's National Training Center, Division of State, Tribal, and Local Assistance.

Virginia's Interactive Web Application Provides Customers with Additional Access to Case Information

Virginia's Child Support Enforcement Program, which serves 558,000 children, now has an interactive Web application to give customers fast and accurate information about their child support cases. The interactive Web application is statewide and monitored centrally by child support and communications staff in the headquarters office in Richmond, Virginia.

It provides customers with the same information provided by the State's automated voice response telephone system, which handles approximately 700,000 calls each month. This information consists of the last six payments made, as well as selected case information such as court dates and enforcement actions.

The minimal costs involved in installing the system were absorbed within existing operations.

Provides customers with . . . the last six payments made, as well as selected case information, such as court dates and enforcement actions.

The interactive Web application was placed on the Internet without announcement in early May 2001, in order to test the application. The public began to access the site almost immediately. Child support staff were encouraged to visit the State's Web page to familiarize themselves with its contents and to note any problems in the application. Minor technical difficulties encountered were quickly resolved.

The new application was publicly announced in late June through a Gubernatorial press release and related press conference. Immediately after the formal announcement, visits to the site tripled, and the numbers steadily increased.

Initial feedback from child support customers has been very positive, with expressions of appreciation for this additional way to access case information.

An important key to success in launching this initiative was early and continued involvement of appropriate staff.

An important key to success in launching this initiative was early and continued involvement of appropriate staff. Staff who worked on this project included internal child support, communications, and audit staff, as well as information technology professionals from within the Department and from the State's IT agency.

The Office of the Attorney General also provided valuable information that was incorporated in the approach as staff worked through design, technical, systems security, privacy, and confidentiality issues. In particular, issues related to privacy, confidentiality, and systems security, are crucial to the integrity of this kind of Web application and must be resolved ahead of time to everybody's satisfaction. Equally important in avoiding customer frustration: the capability to ensure connectivity, as well as the ability to handle capacity and volume of visitors.

If you would like more information about this application, contact Phyllis Sisk, Program Manager in Virginia's Division of Child Support Enforcement, at (804) 692-1501.□

Wisconsin's W-2 Program Found to Benefit Payment and Receipt of Child Support

By: Daniel R. Meyer and Maria Cancian

With the introduction of Wisconsin Works (W-2) in 1997, Wisconsin initiated a new approach to public assistance for low-income families. W-2 replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the program that previously offered cash to low-income, primarily single-parent families.

W-2 participants are placed into one of four tiers of a "self-sufficiency ladder." Two tiers, Unsubsidized and Trial (subsidized) Jobs, provide case management and associated programs, but no cash payment. Two other tiers, Community Service Jobs and W-2 Transitions, provide a cash payment in return for participation in work-like activities.

Recent welfare reforms have increased the potential importance of child support as an income source for low-income single-parent families. Time limits, work requirements, and the lack of an entitlement to cash assistance have made nonwelfare sources of income essential.

In Wisconsin, relatively stringent work requirements have been combined with a uniquely generous approach to child support. Among most mothers participating in W-2, any child support paid on behalf of their children is passed through to them and is disregarded in the calculation of their W-2 cash payments. In contrast, in most other states, child support paid on behalf of children receiving cash assistance is kept by the government to offset welfare costs, and the family receives no additional income.

To evaluate the impact of the full pass-through, the W-2 child support policy was implemented as a random-assignment experiment. This report presents the results of the first phase of the Child Supprt Demonstration Evaulation (CSDE). It includes results for cases that entered the program during the first three calendar quarters of the experiment.

Most W-2 participants received a full pass-through of child support, but a randomly selected control group received a reduced amount. Because assignment to the experimental (full pass-through) and control (partial pass-through) groups was random, any differences in outcomes between the two groups can be attributed to the difference in the treatment of child support.

We find substantial evidence of the expected direct effects. In 1998, mothers eligible for the full pass-through received about $150 more in child support than did those in the control group. . . . We also find significant increases in the percentage of nonresident fathers paying child support.

The CSDE was designed to evaluate a variety of impacts of this new approach to child support, beginning with the direct effects of the new policy on child support paid and received. We have also tried to measure a wide range of potential secondary effects—on mothers' and fathers' employment and earnings, on parents' interactions, and on the well-being of their children. To evaluate these effects, we use the State's administrative records and a survey of W-2 families.

We find substantial evidence of the expected direct effects. In 1998, mothers eligible for the full pass-through received about $150 more in child support than did those in the control group. Among those initially in a lower tier, and thus subject to a reduced pass-through if they were in the control group, the difference was about $200.

Although these differences in amounts of child support received by mothers are due in large part to the mechanical effect of the full pass-through, we also find significant increases in the percentage of nonresident fathers paying child support. These dif-

Continued on page 7, "Wisconsin W-2."

Minnesota Child Support Program Reaches Out to Incarcerated Parents

Most Minnesota child support offices routinely include noncustodial fathers in their outreach. Reaching out to these fathers who are in jail or prison, however, is a new effort that State and county staff are undertaking. Last year, almost 6,400 adults—94 percent male—were incarcerated in Minnesota State prisons.

"We estimate that half the inmates are involved with the child support system," said Mike Caris, coordinator for the Child Support Enforcement Division's (CSED) incarcerated parent outreach. "With average sentences lasting 39 months, we're looking at significant arrearages accruing for parents who have little or no income," he said. "Many of these men are not aware that they can request a modification of their order."

"The key is to make child support information available to prisoners when they first come into the system. This is when county outreach is critical."

.....Barb Jorgenson, Anoka County Supervisor

Barb Jorgenson, Anoka County child support supervisor, recently joined State staff for a presentation at the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Lino Lakes. "The key is to make child support information available to prisoners when they first come into the system," she said. "This is when county outreach is critical."

After recent exchanges between CSED and the State's Department of Corrections, child support materials are now provided to incarcerated parents at intake interviews early in their sentences. Inmates receive the parent handbook, a sample modification request letter, and tips for navigating the system and staying connected to their kids.

CSED also is targeting incarcerated fathers by using a portion of a federal grant to assist low-income dads. By funding three Hennepin County child support officers, this 17-month, $300,000 Special Improvement Project (SIP) grant will also serve noncustodial parents who have recently established paternity, as well as those with substantial public assistance arrears. Each officer will be assigned to a group of parents and a research project. And each will be expected to contact about 100 incarcerated parents and assist 50.

Another effort is the Sentencing to Service Homes Project, managed by Hennepin County Community Corrections. Through this project, noncustodial fathers serving time in prison learn construction skills. Their earnings are put into escrow so they can start paying child support and help their children leave welfare.

State legislation is pending to allow the court to retroactively modify a child support obligation and order the cessation of interest while a parent is incarcerated.□

This article, in slightly different form, originally appeared in the Minnesota Child Support Program's Child Support Quarterly, Spring, 2001. *Used with permission.*

Child Support Children First

Wisconsin W-2

Continued from page 5.

ferences are statistically significant but fairly small in the full sample: 52 percent of fathers of children in the experimental group and 50 percent of fathers of children in the control group paid child support in 1998.

We also find significantly higher rates of paternity establishment for those in the experimental group in 1998.

However, among those more likely to be new to the child support and welfare systems, the differences were more substantial. Among those cases in which the mother had not received AFDC in the two years prior to entering W-2, 58 percent of fathers with children in the experimental group, compared to only 48 percent of fathers with children in the control group, paid child support in 1998. The differences remained significant and in many cases increased in 1999.

Finally, we also find significantly higher rates of paternity establishment for those in the experimental group in 1998, although the difference declined and was not statistically significant for most groups in 1999.

We find less consistent evidence of secondary effects, although in selected areas there is substantial evidence that the experiment had the expected impact. We hypothesized that an increase in child support received would reduce the need for cash payments. We find evidence of this effect in 1998, with significant and larger differences among those mothers who received a W-2 cash payment and among mothers with a history of higher child support amounts.

In other areas we find little consistent evidence of an experimental impact. There were few significant impacts on mothers' employment or earnings, and few consistent impacts on child well-being, although there was some evidence of fewer health limitations and improved educational outcomes for children in the experimental group.

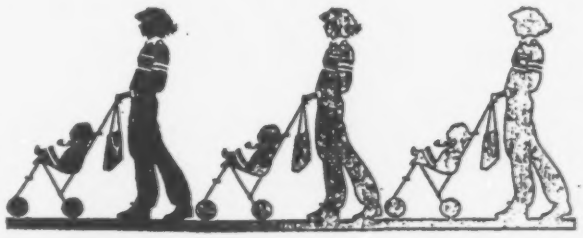
Finally, while we find significant differences in some of the components of total government costs, we find no difference in overall government costs. Although more child support is passed through to those in the experimental group, not all of this is at the expense of the government, since some consists of additional support that would not have been paid in the absence of the full pass-through. More important, the reform also generated cost savings in other areas, especially W-2 cash payments.

In summary, the results of the CSDE presented here demonstrate that Wisconsin's full pass-through has been able to increase child support amounts received among an economically vulnerable population, to increase child support collections, and to have a variety of other positive effects. These benefits have come at little cost to the government.□

The full text of the report can be found at http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/csde/phase1-tocs.htm.

Executive summaries are available at http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/csde/phase1-voll-es.htm.

Daniel R. Meyer is a Professor and Director of the School of Social Work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Maria Cancian is an Associate Professor of Public Affairs and Social Work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Both are Affiliates of the Institute for Research on Poverty and the Center for Demography and Ecology, also at Wisconsin-Madison.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement
Division of Consumer Services
Mail Stop OCSE/DCS
370 L'Enfant Promenade
Washington D.C. 20447

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Return this sheet to above address if
☐ you do not want to receive this material
☐ a change of address is needed:
indicate change, including zip code.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Administration for
Children and Families
Permit No. G-717

48224
KAREN SMITH
ERIC/CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTER/UNIV OF IL
51 GERTY DR
CHAMPAIGN IL 61820-7453

Child Support Report

North Carolina Amnesty Week Brings in More than $278,000

61820+7453 46

From May 7 – 11, 2001, 43 North Carolina child support offices participated in the State's 2nd annual amnesty week.

For the convenience of the parents, child support offices stayed open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Amnesty week gives non-custodial parents the opportunity to contact their local child support office to pay off arrears, or make arrangements to do so in lieu of legal action.

For the convenience of the parents, child support offices stayed open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and a variety of community resources were available to assist parents with job searches and educational/training opportunities.

Harnett County, with $30,741 in collections and Pender County, with $28,172, together made up more than 20 percent of the statewide total of $278,808.☐

Child Support Report
Vol. XXIII No. 9
September 2001

Child Support Report is a publication of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services.

Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Wade F. Horn

Acting Commissioner, OCSE
Frank Fuentes

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax (202) 205-5614
Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

CSR is published for information purposes only. No official endorsement of any practice, publication, or individual by the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Child Support Enforcement is intended or should be inferred.

Internet:
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/index.html
Permission to reprint articles is granted.
Acknowledging **CSR** is appreciated.

If you have enjoyed this issue of ***Child Support Report,*** *please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*

Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement

Vol. XXIII, No. 10, October 2001

Dr. Sherri Z. Heller Named to Head OCSE

Sherri Z. Heller has been named to head the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement. For the previous six years, as Deputy Secretary for Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare Office of Income Maintenance, Dr. Heller carried responsibility for child support enforcement, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, and child care, as well as food stamp, job training, and cash assistance programs.

Under her direction, Pennsylvania was a leader in child support enforcement, collecting more than $9.3 billion and automating its system of collection, enforcement, and disbursement of child support.

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge said, "Sherri Heller's goals have been to inspire people to succeed—not to use mandates and regulations to solve their problems. Her talents and expertise will be missed here."

Reflecting on the change, Dr. Heller, who grew up in the Washington, D.C. area and knows it well, says, "I think I bring a record of results: a recognition that government isn't a system of funding streams and programs but something people expect to work. I like the idea that I have something to work on that makes a difference to people."

Her previous experience includes a tour as County Administrator in Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Assistant to the President Pro Tem, Pennsylvania Senate; Executive Director of Lancaster County Mental Health/Mental Retardation and Drug and Alcohol Abuse Programs; and Chief, Division of Fiscal Administration of Pennsylvania's Department of Education.

Dr. Sherri Z. Heller

She graduated from Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and holds a doctorate in education from Harvard.

Dr. Heller enjoys music and drama and performs frequently in community theatre productions. Asked to compare theatre to government, she pauses only briefly. "Success in both," she says, "means connecting with people."

More information about Dr. Heller's goals for the Child Support Enforcement Program will be featured in *Child Support Report* over the next several months. □

PS 03012

U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Inside

HHS Awards $1.8 Million in R & D Grants.....2
Faith-Based Organizations Encouraged to Be Active.....6

HHS Awards $1.8 Million in R & D Grants

On September 28, HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson announced the award of more than $1.8 million in research and demonstration grants to 12 states: Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The grants support innovative programs for strengthening and improving the child support program.

"Increasing child support collections is vital for the millions of children in need."

.....*HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson*

"Increasing child support collections is vital for the millions of children in need," the Secretary said, "and these fresh approaches from the states hold great promise for improving the lives of our children."

The projects will examine a number of broad areas. For example:

- **Illinois** will provide services to formerly incarcerated fathers to assist them to become more financially and emotionally connected to their children;
- **Minnesota** and **New Mexico** will increase services to previously underserved nonEnglish speaking populations, such as those fluent in Spanish or Hmong;
- **Missouri** will work with incarcerated fathers to improve their financial and emotional support of their children;
- **New Jersey** and **Virginia** will work with community service providers to increase child support program outcomes for children;
- **South Carolina** will collaborate with local community and faith-based groups to provide early intervention services to fathers to improve their payment of child support and their connections to their children;
- **Texas** will provide training to young, low-income fathers to enhance their ability to pay child support and improve their parenting skills; and
- **Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin,** and **Wyoming** will use technology to improve overall management of their child support programs through improved use of data.

The demonstrations require an evaluation. The grants will cover a substantial portion of the projects' costs, with the remaining costs coming from other federal child support enforcement funds. Each grantee also will contribute at least five percent of the total cost of the project.

Grant Recipients

Illinois Department of Public Aid
A collaborative effort with the Department of Corrections and community agencies to promote family self-sufficiency.
$193,268

Minnesota Department of Human Services
Examining the role of language-specific child support workers in improving performance and customer satisfaction.
$62,500

Missouri Department of Social Services
Incarcerated fathers collaboration project.
$192,607

New Jersey Department of Human Services
A collaborative effort to promote healthy families.
$127,600

New Mexico Department of Human Services
Comprehensive outreach supporting paternity and support order entry.
$217,667

South Carolina Department of Social Services
Early intervention to enhance fatherhood initiative.
$106,801

Texas Office of the Attorney General
The Bootstrap Project—mediation, partial child support reimbursement, and Jobs program.
$105,245

Vermont Agency of Human Service
Data warehousing and data mining.
$199,941

Continued on page 5, "Grants."

Dr. Wade F. Horn Addresses OCSE's 11th National Training Conference

On September 10, 2001, Dr. Wade F. Horn, newly confirmed Assistant Secretary of the Administration for Children and Families, provided the keynote address to more than 500 participants at OCSE's 11th National Training Conference. Commenting on his background as a child psychologist, he told his audience that most of his working life has been devoted to advocacy for children.

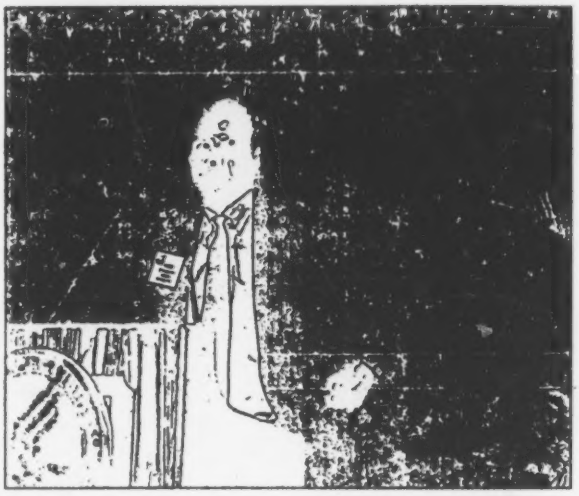
> *"All the programs I have overseen and all the strategies I have pursued in the past have had one goal: the well-being of children."*
>
> .....*Wade F. Horn*

"The well-being of kids," he said, "has been at the forefront of my thinking for a very long time. All the programs I have overseen and all the strategies I have pursued in the past have had one goal: the well-being of children. My work on fatherhood issues these past several years, important as it was for dads themselves, served the higher goal of enriching the lives of children."

Dr. Horn commended the child support program for growth in understanding of its mission in recent years—for "embracing the notion, supported by research, that children do better in intact families." In his remarks, Dr. Horn underscored the importance of healthy marriages and said that child support should be prepared to encourage and support couples who show an inclination to wed.

"If we want to make a real difference in the lives of children," he said, "we cannot afford to ignore the issue of healthy marriage."

Although working to involve both parents—resident and nonresident—in the lives of their children is important, Dr. Horn also said that child support must not lose sight of its primary responsibility to provide economic support for children. With the decline of welfare caseloads, child support is more important than ever to families struggling to gain and maintain economic stability.



Dr. Wade F. Horn listens to a participant's question at 11th national conference.

Dr. Horn reminded those in attendance of the many nonresident parents who care deeply about their children and pay their child support faithfully. In cases where there are support orders, more than two-thirds of the parents are paying. Other nonresident parents want to fulfill their obligations but need help.

Some unwed fathers, for example, especially in low-income communities, lack the resources to provide financially for their children. These men need support in training for, finding, and keeping employment.

In some cases, however, parents who have the means simply do not pay. And for this group, Dr. Horn said, "it is appropriate to use every tool at our disposal to get them to pay."

While money alone cannot make up for the absence of fathers in their children's lives, the income from regular child support can make a decided difference in the quality of those lives.□

An Interview with Pauline Burton, President of the National Council of Child Support Directors

Colorado Child Support Director Pauline Burton

On September 18, *CSR* spoke with Pauline Burton, President of the National Council of Child Support Directors. Pauline also is the Child Support Director in Colorado, a position she has held since 1996.

CSR: *Pauline, thanks for taking time to speak with us. You've been director of Colorado's child support program for more than 5 years. What are some of the attributes of a successful child support director?*

PB: First, it helps to really love the work. What we do is so important. Enthusiasm, the opportunity to be creative and to be innovative are real benefits to this job. Having a great staff coupled with strong legislative support allows for the building of a strong child support program.

CSR: *How did you get into child support?*

PB: I have worked in public administration and public welfare programs at a variety of levels in Colorado for a period of twenty years or so. During that time, I gained experience in every one of the human services programs except child welfare. In 1987, I had the good fortune to be appointed to Colorado's very first child support task force, which I am still a member of. As a result of that experience, I became very familiar with the child support enforcement program and in March of 1996 received the offer I couldn't refuse.

CSR: *The past few years have been turbulent ones for the states' child support programs and directors. How do you view the overall health and well-being of the National Council?*

PB: It's a very solid, very strong organization, in large part because the members—the membership is limited to child support directors—are dedicated and great leaders. It's also congenial. With a small group, you can get to know each other pretty well. That encourages frequent contact—sometimes on an almost daily basis—by phone, the Internet, e-mail, or in person. And that's a real source of strength. The directors are very supportive of one another. For example, we do a great deal of "surveying" to get perspective on an issue. If one of us has a problem or a question, we can quickly canvass the other directors and expect to get a lot of help with it.

CSR: *There continues to be a good deal of turnover of state child support directors each year. What sorts of training opportunities are there for new directors?*

PB: The Council hosts 2 or 3 yearly conferences/meetings that offer excellent training opportunities both for new and experienced directors. We also support continuation of OCSE's recently developed leadership training courses, which, I believe, have a component for new directors and their executive staff, as well as one for the more experienced direc-

Continued on page 5, "Interview."

Interview

Continued from page 4.

tors and staff. We see these as valuable resources.

CSR: *As president, what are you planning to emphasize this year?*

PB: I think it's very important to establish a dialogue with OCSE's new Commissioner, Dr. Sherri Heller. All of us in the Council are looking forward to working with her. We hope to have regular conversations around some current significant issues.

"We . . . need to continue to build on the spirit of partnership that has been a hallmark of child support the past several years."

CSR: *Such as . . .*

PB: There's a fairly long list here: The reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, simplified distribution, removal of the cap on incentives, continuing to improve interstate enforcement, and issues around confidentiality and safeguarding information. We also need to continue to build on the spirit of sharing and partnership that has been a hallmark of child support the past several years in such areas as strategic planning and the use of Federal/State work groups to study issues and develop recommendations. We support a commitment to research and demonstration and would like to see more forums for stakeholders, such as the conference for state legislators that OCSE sponsored a couple of years ago.

CSR: *Do you see any special challenges for the program?*

PB: I think the main challenge is to stabilize the funding base of the child support program. The decline in TANF revenues has really changed the landscape. We also need to arrive at a very firm place in terms of our identity. As a program, we've moved in recent years from emphasizing recovery of costs to helping families achieve economic security, but we are still judged largely on how much money we collect. We need to find the proper balance and relationship between these two objectives, which I think are complementary but may also be seen as being in opposition to one another.

CSR: *Thank you.*□

Grants

Continued from page 2.

Virginia Department of Social Services

From case number to client: reducing barriers to the collection of child support through interagency collaboration and case management.

$100,000

Washington Department of Social and Health Services

Building a longitudinal and predictive child support knowledge management system: a data warehousing and data mining project to build the capacity of Washington State.

$200,000

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Wisconsin's Child Support Data Mart.

$166,619

Wyoming Department of Family Services

Using data warehousing to improve children's medical coverage and management effectiveness in Wyoming's IV-D program.

$124,993.□

Faith-Based Organizations Encouraged to Be More Active Participants with Government

Elizabeth Seale-Scott, the Director of HHS's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, addressed OCSE's 11th National Training Conference on the importance of faith-based organizations looking to be more active participants with government in the delivery of child support services.

Ms. Seale-Scott directed the HHS department-wide audit to identify existing barriers to the participation of faith-based and other community organizations in the delivery of social services by the department.

The report, "Unlevel Playing Field: Barriers to Participation by Faith-Based and Community Organizations in Federal Social Service Programs," dated August 2001, summarizes the initial findings from HHS's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, as well as those of four other cabinet departments with similar faith-based offices.

Among the report's findings are two of special significance relative to how religious and grassroots organizations seek to serve the common good in collaboration with the Federal Government:

- Smaller groups, faith-based and secular, receive very little federal support relative to the size and scope of the social services they provide; and
- There exists a widespread bias against faith- and community-based organizations in federal social service programs.

Ms. Seale-Scott counsels faith-based organizations that may be considering a partnership with the Federal Government to:

- Be knowledgeable about their communities;
- Use trained volunteers to help with the workload;
- Study the organization of federal, state, and local governments, especially their funding mechanisms;
- Recognize the importance of accountability and record keeping;
- Understand their own organizational strengths; and
- Be active in seeking other funding, as government grants are not meant to sustain operations over a long period.□

Northeast Hub Hosts Meeting on Arrears Management

By: Jens Feck

Northeast Hub Director Mary Ann Higgins recently convened a two-day meeting on arrears management in Philadelphia for the states and territories in the Northeast Hub. The meeting grew out of a recommendation by Alisha Griffin, New Jersey's child support director.

Meeting participants organized the issues, strategies, and best practices identified in four simultaneous roundtable discussions into a framework to develop guiding principles and state-specific policies for managing arrears. Relevant definitions, issues, strategies, and next-steps were organized into four categories:

- Prevention of Arrears (with a focus on pre-child support activities);
- Order Establishment (including default orders, retroactivity, unemployed noncustodial parents, and nonchild support obligations);
- Early Intervention (including noncustodial parent access to modification and review and adjustment, prompt terminations, and immediate enforcement actions); and

Continued on page 7, "Hub."

Child Support Children First

Hub

Continued from page 6.

- Accrued arrears management (including enforcement suspension, arrears compromise, arrears sell-off, and segregation of able to pay from not able to pay).
- Northeast Hub jurisdictions view this meeting and the subsequent release of the "Northeast Hub Report on Managing Arrears," to be the first steps towards the successful management of a difficult issue. The amount of arrears has grown to over $80 billion nationwide.

Those who participated in the meeting intend to redesign, expand, and implement new policies to accommodate various arrears issues and to report on implementation successes and barriers in future meetings.

In addition, Northeast Hub States intend to share their work products with their counterparts in other regions and at future training conferences. For more information about the Hub meeting and to obtain a copy of the "Northeast Hub Report on Managing Arrears," contact Jens A. Feck at (787) 766-5196 (jfeck@acf.dhhs.gov).□

Jens Feck is a Program Specialist in ACF's Region II, New York Office.

Nebraska Receives Certification

Nebraska has received certification of its computer system for meeting the requirements of the Family Support Act. Congratulations to the State for this achievement!□

6th Circuit Affirms Constitutionality of CSRA

On September 25, 2000, a three-judge panel of the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals determined in *United States v. Faasse,* a case considering a Commerce Clause challenge to the Child Support Recovery Act (CSRA), that most provisions of the CSRA were unconstitutional.

Then on December 1, a rehearing *en banc* was granted and the September 25 opinion was vacated. On March 7, 2001, an *en banc* panel of the 6th Circuit Court heard oral arguments.

[Editor's note: *En banc* reviews are rare and generally require all of the appellate judges to consider the matter in question.]

The 6th Circuit . . . upheld the CSRA as a constitutional enactment under the Commerce Clause.

Finally, on September 14, 2001, in an 8-4 decision, the 6th Circuit overturned the earlier decision and upheld the CSRA as a constitutional enactment under the Commerce Clause.

The court stated, "All ten of our sister circuits that have considered the constitutionality of the CSRA in Commerce Clause challenges after *United States v. Lopez,* 514 U.S. 549 (1995), have upheld the statute. We now join them in concluding that the CSRA is an appropriate exercise of Congress' power under the Commerce Clause. Therefore, we AFFIRM the judgment of the district court as to the constitutionality of the statute."

The majority's statement includes the following: "[A]n interstate court-ordered child support payment clearly is a 'thing' in the interstate commerce. . . . Therefore, the Congress may freely regulate the interstate court-ordered child support payment, provided we find that the statute's means are rationally related to its ends, which we do."□

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement
Division of Consumer Services
Mail Stop OCSE/DCS
370 L'Enfant Promenade
Washington D.C. 20447

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Return this sheet to above address if
☐ you do not want to receive this material
☐ a change of address is needed:
indicate change, including zip code.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Administration for
Children and Families
Permit No. G-717

48224
KAREN SMITH
ERIC/CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTER/UNIV OF IL
51 GERTY DR
CHAMPAIGN IL 61820-7453

Child Support Report

2001 Conference Calendar

October

21-25 *Western Interstate Child Support Enforcement Council (WICSEC) Annual Training Conference,* Omni San Antonio Hotel, San Antonio, TX, Cheryl Kable: (512) 460-6348.

November

4-8 *ACF Information Systems Meeting,* Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D.C., **Federal and State Staff Only,** Robin Rushton (202) 690-1244.

7-8 *NE Hub ACF/DOL Conference on Welfare-to-Work,* Sheraton Rittenhouse Square Hotel, Philadelphia, PA, Joanne Krudys (212) 264-2890 X 127 or Juanita DeVine (215) 861-4054.

12-13 *NCSEA Fall Training Conference, Interstate and Administrative Enforcement,* Adams Mark Hotel, Indianapolis, IN, Carol Henry (202) 624-8180.

26-28 *Tennessee Conference on Child Support Enforcement,* River Terrace Resort & Convention Center, Gatlinburg, TN, Gladys Carr (615) 313-4880.☐

Child Support Report
Vol. XXIII No. 10
October 2001

Child Support Report is a publication of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services.

Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Wade F. Horn, Ph.D

Acting Commissioner, OCSE
Frank Fuentes

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax (202) 205-5614
Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

CSR is published for information purposes only. No official endorsement of any practice, publication, or individual by the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Child Support Enforcement is intended or should be inferred.

Internet:
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/index.html
Permission to reprint articles is granted. Acknowledging **CSR** is appreciated.

If you have enjoyed this issue of ***Child Support Report,*** *please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*

Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement Vol. XXIII, No. 11, November 2001

Dr. Sherri Heller Addresses WICSEC Conference Participants in San Antonio

On October 22, Dr. Sherri Heller, Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Child Support Enforcement, addressed the Western Interstate Child Support Enforcement Council's 18th Annual Training Conference in San Antonio, Texas.

In recent years, she told listeners, the child support program reinvented itself, with an expanded mission beyond service to those on public assistance and with unprecedented new enforcement tools. Still, the public continues to be confused by such things as the program's complex distribution rules, and customer frustration is expressed in "the most heartbreaking" letters.

"Together, we will build an agenda that will work on aspects of the child support program that cause frustration and that need to be improved."

.....Dr. Sherri Z. Heller

Moreover, since 1984 the program's customer base has changed dramatically. By the early 1990s, the program was serving more nonpublic assistance customers than public assistance recipients. Today, the nation's child support caseload is composed of nearly 6.2 million persons who have never been on public assistance, 3.3 million who are currently receiving public assistance through the TANF program, and another 7.9 million former public assistance recipients.

"The public is rooting for us to succeed . . . they want us to do the best job we possibly can on behalf of the nation's children and families . . . Together, we won't let them down." *.....Dr. Sherri Z. Heller*

These are new days for child support, and "together," she said, "we will build an agenda that will work on aspects of the child support program that cause frustration and that need to be improved."

"The public is rooting for us to succeed," Dr. Heller said. "They have given us permission to gather data on the most intimate aspects of their lives and they want us to do the best job we possibly can on behalf of the nation's children and families."

"Together," she promised, "we won't let them down."□

PS 030112

U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Inside

Research Findings in Hennepin County.....3
Arizona, Utah Promote Marriage.....4

Presidential Meritorious Executive Rank Award to Leon McCowan

On Monday, October 15, the President recognized Leon McCowan, ACF West-Central Hub Director, as one of the winners of the 2001 Presidential Meritorious Rank Executive Award. Mr. McCowan is the ACF lead Hub director for the child support enforcement program.

The Meritorious Executive Rank Award is conferred on no more than five percent of career SES government-wide.

Since 1978, Presidents have conferred the Presidential Rank Award, the highest government award for career SES members, to a select group of executives who have demonstrated exceptional performance over an extended period of time. The Meritorious Executive Rank Award is conferred on no more than five percent of career SES government-wide.

Leon received the award for his extraordinary executive leadership and accomplishments in developing breakthrough strategies that have led ACF to streamlined services, reduced inefficiencies, and enhanced cost-effectiveness. His innovative use of technology, coupled with his use of a results-oriented framework, has transformed ACF from an agency focused on traditional methods of operation to a highly flexible, technologically competitive, and streamlined one.□

Lac du Flambeau Tribe Receives Direct Federal Funding for Child Support Program

The Lac du Flambeau Tribe, located on a 144 square mile reservation in north central Wisconsin, has been awarded a direct federal grant to operate a Tribal Child Support Enforcement Program. They are the first Wisconsin Tribe and the first in the Midwest Hub region and one of only four Tribes nationally to receive direct federal funding for child support services.

They are the first Wisconsin Tribe and the first in the Midwest Hub region and one of only four Tribes nationally to receive direct federal funding for child support services.

To receive direct funding, Tribes must be able to demonstrate that they have the capacity to operate child support enforcement programs meeting the objectives of title IV-D of the Social Security Act, including: establishing paternity; establishing, modifying, and enforcing support orders; and locating absent parents.

Dr. Sherri Heller, Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Child Support Enforcement, participated in the special luncheon and grant award signing ceremony honoring the Lac du Flambeau Tribe, held November 6 at the Lake of the Torches Convention Center in north central Wisconsin.□

Research Findings on Customer Cooperation in Hennepin County, Minnesota

By: Esther Ann Griswold

The Minnesota Division of Child Support Enforcement (CSE) and the Hennepin County CSE agency recently completed an OCSE-funded three-year demonstration project that focused on examining the incidence of customer cooperation with the child support program. The "Hennepin County Video Interviewing and Client Referral Services" project was designed to develop, test, and evaluate the benefits of a coordinated child support/TANF process that included effective interviewing procedures and arrangements, screening and assessments of applicants regarding barriers to cooperation, and referrals to community resources.

Three child support assumptions were tested by the project.

1. When child support offices and public assistance offices are separated geographically, it is sometimes thought that a stand-alone interactive video system can be easily and inexpensively substituted for other interview formats.

To overcome the distance between the child support and TANF agencies in Minneapolis, Hennepin County tested the use of an interactive video system. The project compared the performance of three child support interview formats: telephone, video, and in-person interviews.

Analysis of data from the project shows that the three formats perform similarly when eliciting information to locate noncustodial parents, and differences are modest. In-person interviews, however, are most effective in obtaining disclosures of domestic violence and in gathering information leading to the establishment of paternity.

The reactions of customers exposed to the video, telephone, and in-person interview formats also are similar, with more than 80 percent of each format group responding positively. Child support workers, however, prefer the telephone format for its convenience and effectiveness in most cases.

In some cases, the low-cost equipment and early video technology used for this project produced poor quality video images, and delays between the visual and auditory tracks, leading some child support workers to conduct video interviews without turning on the screen. Also, workers felt that video interviews, which were not conducted at their desks but in special private rooms, interrupted the flow of their regular work patterns.

. In-person interviews [were found to be] most effective in obtaining disclosures of domestic violence and in gathering information leading to the establishment of paternity.

2. Most custodial parents receiving public assistance do not want to cooperate with child support requirements.

This notion is not supported by results in Hennepin County. Approximately 95 percent of the public assistance applicants who underwent a child support interview provided a name for the noncustodial parent during the project's first phase, and roughly two-thirds provided the date of birth.

The monthly rate of new sanctions imposed by CSE on customers receiving public assistance was consistently low, ranging from .3 percent to 1.4 percent. Approximately 57 percent of sanctioned customers responded within the month to avoid a financial penalty.

3. Custodial parents choose not to cooperate with child support because they are protecting the noncustodial parent.

While some individuals appear to be willing to disregard agency requirements and accept sanctions, **in many instances, other forces may be at work.** For example, interviews with sanctioned custodial

Continued on page 7, "Hennepin County."

Mobilization of Reservists for Military Operation Enduring Freedom

OCSE IM-01-09--Review and Adjustment, dated November 13, 2001

In the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Congress authorized the President to activate up to 50,000 U.S. reserve troops for duty. For some persons, being called to active duty can mean a reduction of total monthly income.

Those reservists who are currently making child support payments based on higher monthly income may find that arrears will begin to accumulate when monthly child support payments are not met. Additionally, custodial parents who are activated may also be affected in their ability to meet their children's needs.

Reservists experiencing a reduction in monthly income may wish to contact their child support office to request a review and modification of their child support orders. The information a child support agency needs to accomplish an adjustment can vary from state to state. However, basic information needed to process a request should include the reason for the request (provide a copy of your orders), current military pay information (such as pay grade and time in service, or the latest leave and earnings statement), and child support order information.

We encourage all state child support agencies, courts, and legal associations to give these requests for adjustment of a child support order the highest priority and flexibility allowable under state law. We ask that military family community support centers and legal assistance offices provide support when needed. We further urge the appropriate Department of Defense offices to make this information available to activated reservists.

For more information, contact the ACF Regional Office or local child support office in your area.□

Arizona and Utah Promote Marriage

Of interest to the nation's child support community, Arizona and Utah are using TANF funds for projects aimed at promoting healthy marriages. The projects build on the Welfare Reform legislation's requirement to "encourage the formation and maintenance of two parent families."

In Phoenix, Arizona, eleven community organizations are participating in the State's $1,000,000 program to help couples prepare for and sustain healthy marriages. Projects will offer marriage and communication skills workshops for couples who are either planning to marry or have recently married. These workshops also will cover such topics as family law and family budgeting. A marriage handbook will be published and given without charge to marriage license applicants.

"We thought it was time to invest on the front end, in an effort to prevent, or at least reduce, some of the problems that couples encounter in marriage."

.....Arizona Representative Mark Anderson

According to Representative Mark Anderson, Chairman of Arizona's House Committee on Human Services, the State's decision is a recognition of the importance of prevention. "We thought it was time to invest on the front end," he said, "in an effort to prevent, or at least reduce, some of the problems that couples encounter in marriage."

In Utah, $600,000 from TANF funds have been provided to the Governor's Commission on Marriage to fund four projects to increase healthy marriages. One project will produce a video for couples anticipating marriage or re-marriage. The video will be produced in both English and Spanish and distributed through the offices of the county clerks when couples apply for a marriage license.

Continued on page 7, "Marriage."

Five States Award Access and Visitation Grants to Faith-Based Organizations

By: Tom Starnes

Faith-based organizations are serving families through Access and Visitation Program grants in five States: Hawaii, Iowa, New York, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. The Access and Visitation Grant Program was created under section 469B of Title IV-D of the Social Security Act as amended by Title III of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.

The purpose of the program is to enable states to establish and administer programs to support and facilitate noncustodial parents' access to and visitation of their children. A total of $10 million per year has been granted to states since 1997. Funds are granted to states based on the number of children in single family households, with a minimum per state grant of $100,000.

Hawaii

Hawaii has employed the services of The Island of Hawaii YMCA. This project focuses on supervised and unsupervised visitation and modeling of appropriate parental behaviors, and addresses a variety of child developmental and adjustment issues. According to Maureen Kiehm, the State's Access and Visitation Program coordinator, The Island of Hawaii YMCA was selected to provide these services because it is the only agency in the jurisdiction with the necessary expertise and qualifications. In addition, it has a seventy year "history of commitment to the community in encouraging responsible life style choices."

Iowa

From the beginning of the Access and Visitation Grant Program, Iowa has involved the faith community in the development of its fatherhood pilot projects. In the first year, one of their three grants went to Lutheran Social Services of Iowa. In the second year, two of the three grantees had active participation of the faith community on their planning boards and one used churches as neutral exchange sites. In the third year, all three of the grantees have active participation of the faith community on their planning boards. Polk County, through its Fostering Male Involvement Project, relies on the faith community as a provider of mentors.

New York

New York State is working with three faith-based organizations: Catholic Charities of Buffalo, the YWCA of Duchess County in the mid-Hudson area, and St. Catherine's Center for Children in Albany. Each of these faith-based groups was initially selected for an access and visitation grant in 1998 and their contracts have been renewed each year since.

Judith Smith, the State's Access and Visitation Program coordinator, says: "These groups bring to the table a wealth of opportunity for cross-programming due to their broad base of programming. They are well-networked within their respective service areas and enjoy the respect of area public officials at local, county, state and federal regional levels."

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania has funded two faith-based organizations for access and visitation services: the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg, and the Salvation Army of Philadelphia. The Harrisburg YWCA project focuses on visitation by offering services at three convenient sites within the Harrisburg area. Services include monitored exchanges, semi-supervised visitation, and therapeutic visitation.

The Salvation Army project in Philadelphia targets low-income nonresidential parents and their children (ages 5 to 16) from North and West Philadelphia. The project is designed to facilitate nonresidential parents' access to and visitation of their children by offering transportation assistance, structured parent/child visitation, counseling, referral and case management services, and parent education.

Continued on page 7, "Faith-Based."

More on OCSE Training Needs Assessment

The *Child Support Report* previously reported on the state training needs assessment that was developed by the National CSE Training Work Group and Technical Assistance Work Group and disseminated to state child support programs by the National Council of Child Support Directors.

To gain further information about how states view their training needs, OCSE established Follow-Up Teams consisting of state and federal CSE staff to clarify and follow up on specific state training and technical needs that OCSE could assist with through its training and technical assistance activities.

The Follow-Up Teams have found state interest in the following topics and activities.

Medical Support, including implementation and use of the National Medical Support Notice; establishment of a national database of employers and the medical insurance they offer; development of outreach materials for CHIP participants to encourage their use of child support services; and outreach to employers by providing them with information regarding medical support, specifically on the use of the National Medical Support Order.

Collections on Arrears, including guidance concerning reconciliation of arrears in interstate cases, as well as in determining controlling orders.

Collections on Current Support, including additional investigation into the efforts required by child support agencies to establish and maintain collaborations with welfare-to-work agencies for the purpose of referring noncustodial parents to these programs.

Cost Effectiveness, including OCSE-provided technical assistance to states on developing RFPs and managing privatization contracts; and sponsoring a conference on cost effectiveness that would address issues such as the effective use of automation, sharing best practices, and privatization.

Support Order Establishment, including developing a template that states could adapt that would show how other states do their guideline calculations; developing outreach materials for noncustodial parents on the downward modification process; and publishing examples of model support orders that are clearly written and easy to understand.

Paternity Establishment, including improving collaboration between child support agencies and vital statistics offices; and outreach to national hospital and medical associations and accreditation organizations to promote paternity programs.

In response to the states' requests, OCSE is reviewing its training and technical assistance activities under four headings: **Existing Initiatives** that have already been done; **Initiatives Already Under Development,** such as a requested customer service training course that is nearing completion; **Complex Issues,** such as medical support enforcement; and **Areas Outside OCSE Control,** such as new legislation.

More information will be available in the near future as OCSE completes development of a coordinated training and technical assistance response to the findings of the State Assessment Follow-Up Teams.

If you have questions, contact Yvette Riddick, Chief of OCSE's National Training Center, at (202) 401-4885.□

Child Support Children First

Hennepin County

Continued from page 3.

parents indicated a lack of understanding of the regulations, sometimes as a result of language and cultural differences. Although Hispanic/Latino individuals comprise only 2 percent of the public assistance caseload in Hennepin County, they account for 25 percent of the sanctioned CSE cases.

One-quarter of Hennepin County's sanctioned caseload showed patterns of moving in and out of a sanctioned status in both welfare and child support programs.

Additionally, one-quarter of Hennepin County's sanctioned caseload showed patterns of moving in and out of a sanctioned status in both welfare and child support programs. This suggests a need for intensive management of these cases in order to move them to a state of compliance.

Since the beginning of this demonstration project, Hennepin County CSE has developed new procedures and programs to address the issues of collecting information and serving customers with low English skills, including hiring bilingual workers.

To learn more about this project, contact Barry Bloomgren, Division Manager, Hennepin County Division of Child Support Enforcement at (612) 348-3939.□

Esther Ann Griswold is a Research Associate at the Center for Policy Research, Denver, Colorado, which served as the evaluator for this project.

Ohio Receives Certification

Ohio has received certification of its computer system for meeting the requirements of the Family Support Act. Congratulations to the State for this achievement!□

Marriage

Continued from page 4.

The "Promote Marriage and Support Fragile Families' Pilot Program" [in Utah], is directed at low-income families, newlyweds, second marriages, co-habitating couples, and prisoner families.

A second project—the "Promote Marriage and Support 'Fragile Families' Pilot Program"—is directed at low-income families, newlyweds, second marriages, co-habitating couples, and prisoner families. Vouchers will be provided for counseling and mediation services, and to underwrite the expenses of families' attendance at workshops or conferences.

A third project involves Utah State University, which will develop and maintain a web site that includes healthy marriage enrichment information and links to other sites, as well as resources for services.

The fourth project will conduct yearly conferences on marriage, part of which will be a celebration of Marriage Week, including public recognition of successful long-term marriages in the State.□

Faith-Based

Continued from page 5.

West Virginia

West Virginia funded the Charleston Family YMCA to deliver access and visitation services. This project focuses on families dealing with divorce and features a course for children entitled, "Children in the Middle," which helps children to cope with this transitional time in their lives. A course also is offered to parents to fulfill the State's legal requirement for parent education before divorce papers become final.

If you would like more information about faith-based activities in OCSE, contact Tom Starnes at (202) 401-5536.□

Tom Starnes is an Advocacy Relations Specialist in OCSE's Division of Consumer Services.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement
Division of Consumer Services
Mail Stop OCSE/DCS
370 L'Enfant Promenade
Washington D.C. 20447

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Return this sheet to above address if
☐ you do not want to receive this material
☐ a change of address is needed:
indicate change, including zip code.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Administration for Children and Families
Permit No. G-717

55845
KAREN SMITH
COORDINATOR
ERIC CLRNHOUSE
51 GERTY DR
CHAMPAIGN IL 61820-7469

Child Support Report

Alabama, D.C., and Michigan Awarded Bonuses for Reductions in Out-of-Wedlock Births

On September 21, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson announced the award of $75 million in bonuses to Alabama, the District of Columbia, and Michigan for achieving the nation's largest decreases in out-of-wedlock births between 1996 and 1999.

This is the third award of bonuses for reductions in out-of-wedlock births, as provided for in the welfare reform law of 1996. The full press release is available on the Internet at *http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/press/2001/wedlock.html.*☐

Child Support Report
Vol. XXIII No. 11
November 2001

Child Support Report is a publication of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services.

Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Wade F. Horn, Ph.D

Commissioner, OCSE
Sherri Z. Heller, Ed.D.

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax (202) 205-5614
Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

CSR is published for information purposes only. No official endorsement of any practice, publication, or individual by the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Child Support Enforcement is intended or should be inferred.

Internet:
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/index.html
Permission to reprint articles is granted.
Acknowledging **CSR** is appreciated.

90

If you have enjoyed this issue of ***Child Support Report,*** *please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*

Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement | Vol. XXIII, No. 12, December 2001

Iowa Child Support and Employers Partner for Success

By: Nancy Thoma

The State of Iowa's "Employers Partnering in Child Support" (EPICS) program was selected as a finalist for the 2001 Council of State Governments' Innovation Award. This program came about because Iowa's child support managers wanted to make it easier for the State's employers to comply with their child support collection responsibilities.

Since the early 1980's, the child support program nationwide has increasingly relied on the efforts of employers to withhold and then forward the child support owed by noncustodial parents. The passage of welfare reform in 1996 significantly increased the payroll deduction requirements of employers. EPICS was Iowa's attempt to ease the burdens placed on employers while facilitating the process of getting child support payments quickly into the hands of those who need them.

To foster a partnership between the business community and the Iowa Bureau of Collections, a task force of employers and State child support policy staff was created to listen to employers' concerns and make recommendations for program improvements. Chief among the task force's recommendations was the need to provide for more effective and more frequent communication.

This led straight to the creation of EPICS, which

Nancy Thoma

is a centralized one-stop service center for employers to receive child support-related services. Located in Waterloo, it handles employer inquiries about income withholding and medical support orders for over 80,000 employers in Iowa and across the nation.

EPICS uses technology to promote extended and additional access for employers. Staff are available by telephone, e-mail, fax, or through the EPICS Website, which is designed to handle employer inquiries, distribute and receive forms, and respond to requests from other states.

Once an employer has registered on the Website, an income withholding for child or medical support

Continued on page 7, "Iowa."

PS 03012

U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

91

Inside

Bridging the Digital Divide.....5
Delivering Effective Customer Service.....6

Dr. Heller Addresses APHSA Conference

Speaking in early December to the national meeting of the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), OCSE Commissioner Sherri Z. Heller made the improvement of customer service and its connection to increasing collections a major focus of her remarks. Dr. Heller praised APHSA for its 70-year history of working to improve the health and well-being of children and families, and emphasized the need for a continuing partnership between APHSA and child support.

Throughout her speech, Dr. Heller highlighted the importance of "seeing things from the point of view of the customer." This angle of vision has helped her, she said, to gain insight into what she sees as a contradiction between the successes of the child support program and how poorly it tends to be perceived by the public.

Throughout her speech, Dr. Heller highlighted the importance of "seeing things from the point of view of the customer."

The successes of the child support program are many and include increased collections and paternities established, statewide automated systems, the National Directory of New Hires, State Disbursement Units, and other milestones. "But from the customer's point of view," she said, there is "little satisfaction in these accomplishments."

Dr. Heller believes the primary reason for this situation is that "not enough attention has been paid to customer service."

Customer service includes taking a more realistic look at how we report our program successes—and acknowledging our shortcomings. Actively trying to see the customer's point of view—another important form of customer service—also can help us sharpen our appreciation of new policy initiatives, such as working with faith-based organizations and seeking ways to support and promote healthy marriage and family formation in our programmatic initiatives.

Referring to the recently released, "Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study Baseline Report," Dr. Heller noted that unwed parents are committed to each other and to their children at the time of birth.

Four-fifths of the unmarried fathers provide financial or other types of support during the pregnancy, and the overwhelming majority of mothers want the father to be involved in raising their child.

The research has found that 83 percent of unmarried parents are romantically involved at this crucial moment. Seventy-three percent of the unmarried mothers put the chances of marrying the baby's father at 50/50 or better. Four-fifths of the unmarried fathers provide financial or other types of support during the pregnancy, and the overwhelming majority of mothers want the father to be involved in raising their child.

From the "customer point of view," it makes very good sense to link this important data with the process of establishing paternity.

Dr. Heller closed her remarks by commenting on the need for the child support program to earn and maintain public trust. The test for us should be and will be, she promised, "Does it merit the public's trust?"

"Seeing what we do through the eyes of our customers," she said, "will go a long way in helping us meet that test."□

National Family Week Proclamation

President George W. Bush proclaimed the week of November 18 through November 24, 2001 as National Family Week. The following are excerpts from his November 21 Proclamation.

"American families are the bedrock of our society. They are the primary source of strength and health for both individuals and communities across our Nation. . . . My Administration is committed to strengthening the American family.

Many one-parent families are also a source of comfort and reassurance, yet a family with a mom and dad who are committed to marriage and devote themselves to their children helps provide children a sound foundation for success.

Government can support families by promoting policies that help strengthen the institution of marriage and help parents rear their children in positive and healthy environments. . . .

My proposed budget includes initiatives that encourage family cohesion. It provides over $60 million for grants that encourage responsible fatherhood. . . . To strengthen States' ability to promote child safety, stability, and well-being, my budget also proposes a substantial increase in funding for the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program.

These additional resources will help States keep children with their biological families, when safe and appropriate, or place children with loving adoptive families. . . . As we observe National Family Week, we must work to strengthen families in America as individuals and through Government and community-based organizations. This week serves to remind us of the values, security, and love that we give and receive in our families. . ." □

George W. Bush

6th Edition of Best Practices and Good Ideas Now Available

The 2001 (6th Edition) of the "Compendium of State Best Practices and Good Ideas in Child Support Enforcement" contains practical ideas for improving the performance of states' child support programs. The profiles provide information on results, describe the sources of funds, offer replication advice, and furnish contact information for follow-up and questions.

. . . contains practical ideas for improving the performance of states' child support programs.

While OCSE does not endorse any particular practice, we believe that by providing the child support community with examples of best practices and good ideas at the state and local level, overall program performance can be improved.

For future best practice publications, we would like to hear about innovative organizational and training practices in your state. These could be practices that are in place statewide or just in a local area. The important thing is that they produce results. We'd like to share them with readers in other states and jurisdictions.

Submit your practices to your ACF Regional Office CSE Program Specialist, or to Myles Schlank, the Chief of OCSE's Technical Assistance Branch in the Division of State, Local and Tribal Assistance. If you have questions or need further information, Myles can be reached at (202) 401-9329.

We also encourage you to visit OCSE's Home Page on the Internet at www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/.

To request a copy of the "Compendium," call OCSE's National Resource Center at (202) 401-9383 and ask for IM 01-05.□

In Pennsylvania, State/County Communication and Cooperation Assure Systems Success

By: John Clark

Pennsylvania recently received federal PRWORA certification of its automated system, PACSES (Pennsylvania Child Support Enforcement System). PACSES has been cited by the "Child Support Enforcement FY 2000 Data Preview Report" for its success in exceeding the national average on all five performance measures.

Pennsylvania's accomplishment can be attributed to good communication and cooperation among the PACSES partners: the Bureau of Child Support Enforcement (BCSE), the 67 county child support offices, and the Domestic Relations Association of Pennsylvania, the counties' professional organization.

"Collaboration and effective partnerships with the County Domestic Relations Sections, including courts," Pennsylvania's child support director Daniel N. Richard says, "have always been key building blocks in our primary goal of providing timely and quality child support services to families of the Commonwealth."

PACSES has been cited by the "Child Support Enforcement FY 2000 Data Preview Report" for its success in exceeding the national average on all five performance measures.

Mr. Richard makes a presentation at each quarterly board meeting of the Domestic Relations Association and listens closely to the counties' concerns. The counties also hold regular meetings on issues related to PACSES. Other meetings that feature effective two-way communication between the State and counties include: PACSES Advisory Board meetings (in which county and State officials participate); the Title IV-D Advisory Committee; and annual Western, Eastern, and statewide Domestic Relations Association conferences.

Working closely with partners on complex issues can sometimes be a challenge. "The long-standing relationship between the counties' Domestic Relations Offices and the Bureau of Child Support Enforcement," says Jeanette E. Bowers, President of the Pennsylvania Domestic Relations Association, "has not been free of opinion differences and healthy debate. That is also true of the relationship among the 67 county programs . . . [but] long ago we realized that the success of the program depends on our ability to work cooperatively."

Ms. Bowers cites as an example the implementation of Pennsylvania's Statewide Collection and Disbursement Unit. Moving from 67 disbursement units to one central location was not easy. However, the shared commitment to provide financial support to children—and to meet the federal requirement— motivated the implementation team, made up of staff from PACSES, BCSE, and the counties' Domestic Relations Associations.

Other examples of cooperation include:

- The State and counties working together to establish a comprehensive training academy for child support workers;
- PACSES building upon its success in enabling customers to access information about their child support cases via the Internet; and
- The PACSES team, with input from the counties, developing an Internet portal that will substantially improve access to information and the automated system by child support workers and customers, while protecting customers' privacy.

If you would like more information about Pennsylvania's Child Support Enforcement System, contact PACSES Project Director Jeffrey E. Rowe at (717) 705-5100.□

John Clark is a Program Specialist in OCSE's Philadelphia Regional Office.

Bridging the Digital Divide: Illinois Child Support Enforcement Program Helps Head Start Parents Access the Internet

By: Karen Newton-Matza

To help bridge the "digital divide," the Illinois Department of Public Aid, Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE), provided funds from their Head Start/Child Care/Child Support collaboration grant to teach Head Start parents how to use the Internet. DCSE contracted with staff at the University of Illinois at Chicago Family Start Learning Center (FAST) to create an Internet training course for Head Start parents.

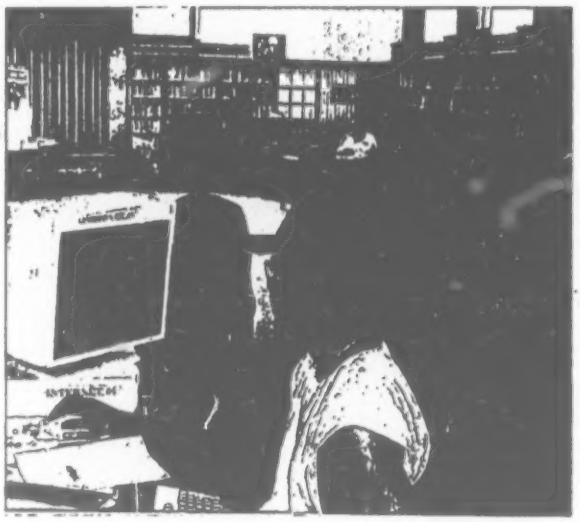
FAST provides computer literacy courses for low-income adults. Working part-time for almost a year, FAST staff created and refined their training package, "Exploring the Internet with Net Notes." In the course, students are taught how to use the Internet and find free access to computers at their neighborhood libraries.

FAST staff trained 35 Head Start parents to teach other parents how to access the Internet. Meeting for eight weeks in local libraries, 60 parents completed the course, which is taught in English and Spanish.

Parents learned basic computer terms, signed up for free e-mail, and learned how to use search engines to find information. They practiced navigating the Internet by visiting the Illinois Collaboration Website at www.regionvqnet.org/2gether4kids. The Website, which was created as part of the Illinois collaboration grant activities, features information on each of the three programs, plus helpful links.

For more information on the Head Start/Child Care/Child Support collaboration project, contact Lois Rakov, who manages the grant, at (312) 793—4568. For more information on the Illinois Collaboration Website, contact Karen Newton-Matza at (312) 793—8213, or visit the Website. For more information on the course, "Exploring the Internet with Net Notes," or the Family Start Learning Centers, contact Shelly Maxwell at (312) 746-5416.□

Karen Newton-Matza is a Public Service Administrator in the Illinois Child Support Program.



The Illinois Collaboration Website

"2gether4kids"

For almost three years, the Illinois Collaboration Website has brought together a diverse group of people working to improve the lives of Illinois' children. Initially conceived as a training site to help parents learn how to use the Internet, "2gether4kids" has grown into a free-standing site where people can go to find information about Head Start, child care, and child support enforcement programs.

The site, which is available in Spanish and English, also features links of interest to mothers, fathers, and grandparents, as well as a link to information on child development. □

Delivering Effective Customer Service

Some may think that becoming customer oriented is more difficult in the public sector than in the private sector. But according to a recently released OCSE-funded study on delivering effective customer service, child support agencies benefit from providing excellent customer service. Excellent service in child support can lead to increased information sharing, increased trust, improved relationships, increased compliance, and, ultimately, increased collections.

The review suggests that child support agencies should make customer service their goal. The evidence also suggests that low staff turnover will lead to high customer satisfaction and that employees who perceive that they are meeting customer needs will have high job satisfaction.

No single tactic, technology, or mission statement is the key to effective customer service delivery.

The study, carried out by the American Bar Association and Circle Solutions, Inc., included a review of customer service literature, the annual reports and Websites of 40 companies mentioned in the literature, and telephone interviews with companies cited in the literature as leaders in customer service.

Three agencies—two private companies and one child support agency—were visited on-site for interviews and data gathering. Throughout the study, an advisory group of four state child support enforcement directors provided input and feedback.

Findings revealed that no single tactic, technology, or mission statement is the key to effective customer service delivery. What is clear is that effective customer service delivery is organization-specific, since services are designed around the targeted customers' desires and the frontline employees delivering the services.

The components of the process for producing effective customer service delivery are summarized in five principles that guide private and public agencies in the delivery of excellent customer service. They are:

- Embrace change and persistently strive to improve (be a learning organization);
- Continually ask the target customers what they want and then give it to them;
- Empower, support, and reward front-line personnel;
- Harness the power of information; and
- Establish an enabling infrastructure.

Both profit-seeking and public agencies that implement effective customer service strategies realize financial benefits, either through increased profits or through reduced costs associated with long-term, informed customers; customer referrals; employee retention; improved information exchange; and streamlined service delivery.

Child support enforcement, in these terms, is like any other business.

Good customer service can improve trust and information exchange, save money, and increase profits. In the private sector, profit and growth are outcomes, not goals. Profit and growth are generated by customer loyalty. Loyalty is generated by customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction therefore is the goal that companies should seek and focus on, because high customer satisfaction produces customer loyalty and subsequently profit and growth. At this point, with customer satisfaction as the goal, the public and private sectors converge.

The full study, "Delivering Effective Customer Service," is available on OCSE's Website at www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse.

For more information, contact Phil Sharman at (202) 401-4626.□

Child Support Children First

TOT Course Updated

OCSE's National Training Center (NTC) Chief Yvette Hilderson Riddick recently delivered the newly revised Training of Child Support Enforcement Trainers (TOT) course in Maryland to 16 participants with various training responsibilities.

Participants said the training was "informative, engaging, and productive, and gave them the opportunity to practice what they learned in interactive case studies and through small group discussions."

The TOT course is an important foundation for every CSE trainer to have in meeting the training needs of evolving state programs. The revised format includes on-line resources through the National Electronic Child Support Resource System (NECSRS), linking state trainers to web based training and other CSE curricula.

A 4-day course designed to build the skills of state trainers, the course provides them with the competencies to use the 5-D Training Process preparing and delivering training to CSE staff in their home states. Participants learn to diagnose the performance problem, design, develop and deliver training and determine the difference (analyze the value of the training after it has been applied to the performance problem).

NTC offers the TOT course several times a year. Contact Bertha Hammett at (202) 401-5292 or bhammett@acf.dhhs.gov for more information. □

Iowa

Continued from page 1

can be made available through the site. The employer can complete the form on-line and return it to EPICS electronically. An employer may also report a new hire on-line through the Website.

The goal of EPICS is to answer an employer's inquiries as quickly as possible. The focus on employers is critical since approximately 71 percent of Iowa's $245 million in annual child support collections comes from income withholding. One indication of customer satisfaction is that employers have been contacting EPICS to report on employee layoffs, terminations, and settlement payments.

Prior to the implementation of EPICS, employers in Iowa had to interact with as many as 19 child support offices, as well as 100 clerks of court offices, depending on who managed the case and where the custodial parent lived. Not only was this confusing and time consuming for employers, it often led to delays in support payments. Now, employers receive the same level of expertise and the same reliable information each time they call.

The results have been gratifying. In calendar year 2000, EPICS located and verified 25,401 new employers of noncustodial parents and generated 11,284 income-withholding orders. Collections received from wage withholding have increased 41 percent since the implementation of EPICS.

During this same time, the percentage of current support collected in the month due has risen from 49 percent in FY 1999 to 62 percent in FY 2000. EPICS answered 22,383 calls from employers in the first six months of 2001.

For more information, contact Nancy Thoma at (515) 281-5647 or by e-mail at nthoma@dhs.state.ia.us; or Carol Eaton, EPICS Manager, at (515) 242-3241, or by e-mail at ceaton@dhs.state.ia.us. □

Nancy Thoma is Chief of Iowa's Bureau of Collections.

U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services

Administration for Children
and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement
Division of Consumer Services
Mail Stop OCSE/DCS
370 L'Enfant Promenade
Washington D.C. 20447

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Return this sheet to above address if
☐ you do not want to receive this material
☐ a change of address is needed:
indicate change, including zip code.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Administration for
Children and Families
Permit No. G-717

48224
KAREN SMITH
ERIC/CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTER/UNIV OF IL
51 GERTY DR
CHAMPAIGN IL 61820-7453

Child Support Report

State Plans Now on OCSE Web

A "read only" electronic version of states' child support state plans is now on the OCSE Website at www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse (click on policy link).

The electronic state plans project is a follow-up effort to the electronic "Interstate Referral Guide" and provides access to important child support public information.

As always, OCSE makes every effort to ensure that the policy documents we make available are accurate, complete, and represent current OCSE policy; however, before relying on any policy document, users are advised to confirm its accuracy by contacting the appropriate Federal Regional Office.

If you would like more information about the electronic state plans project, contact Joe Gloystein, OCSE's Web Master at (202) 401-6741 e-mail Jgloystein@acf.dhhs.gov; or Gail Griffin at (202) 401-4594 e-mail Ggriffin@acf.dhhs.gov.☐

Child Support Report
Vol. XXIII No. 12
December 2001

Child Support Report is a publication of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services.

Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Wade F. Horn, Ph.D

Commissioner, OCSE
Sherri Z. Heller, Ed.D.

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax (202) 205-5614
Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

CSR is published for information purposes only. No official endorsement of any practice, publication, or individual by the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Child Support Enforcement is intended or should be inferred.

Internet:
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/index.html
Permission to reprint articles is granted.
Acknowledging **CSR** is appreciated.

If you have enjoyed this issue of ***Child Support Report,*** *please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*